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WORSHIP IN THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

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FOR WORKERS IN SMALL SCHOOLS

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BY
A. W. MARTIN

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DEDICATED

TO

THE HUNDREDS OF CONSECRATED WORKERS IN VILLAGE
AND OPEN COUNTRY SUNDAY SCHOOLS WHO ARE
STRIVING WITH LIMITED MEANS AND
MANY DIFFICULTIES TO SHARE
WITH THEIR PUPILS
IN CHRISTIAN
WORSHIP

FOREWORD

My first experience in Church work of any kind was as a Sunday school superintendent. As a sixteen-year-old boy I was elected superintendent of a country Sunday school. This school met in a one-room church, and its average attendance for the first year of my superintendency was thirty-nine. There were five classes, and the worship service was known as the "opening exercise." As the superintendent was expected to lead the school in "reading the lesson" every Sunday morning, it was real *exercise*, especially when the lesson happened to contain unpronounceable proper names.

One of the outstanding needs of this one-room Sunday school *was* help in leading its members in the highest of all human activities—the worship of God. And I am sure that after these many years it, and thousands of other Sunday schools similar to it, *still need this help.* At any rate, more than twenty years of intimate association as superintendent, teacher, pastor, and field worker with the workers in hundreds of small Sunday schools have proved to me that it is so.

The purpose of this book, therefore, is to help workers —pastors, officers, teachers, and pupils—in small Sunday schools to share more effectively in Christian worship. An effort is made to help these workers in three main directions.

First, to help them enter into the experience of Christian worship and understand what really happens there.

Second, to offer workable suggestions for making worship a vital part of the work of the Sunday school.

Third, to direct the school in finding suitable materials for use in its worship services.

In the Appendix, I have attempted to provide a limited amount of worship material, and to make suggestions for further additions, with the hope that many schools will be encouraged to start a collection of their own.

Every effort has been made to ascertain the owners of copyright material and to give due credit. Since this has not always been possible, proper acknowledgment will be made as soon as convenient after notification.

If I undertook to acknowledge my debt to all who have kindly shared with me in preparing this material, I should not know where to begin or end. I do, however, wish to acknowledge a special debt to the Editorial and Administrative Staffs of the General Sunday School Board of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, under whose general supervision this book was written. Rev. J. Q. Schisler, Miss Lucy Foreman, Miss Mary Skinner, Mr. O. S. Gates, and Miss Barnett Spratt, read the manuscript and made many helpful suggestions.

To all these, and to Mrs. Martin, whose sympathy and encouragement made the preparation of this book possible, I hereby express my sincere thanks.

THE AUTHOR.

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CHAPTER I

THE MEANING OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

A GROUP of Sunday school officers and teachers was discussing the many problems connected with their work. One after another, they had raised questions about improving what they called the "opening exercise" of the school. All seemed to agree that this service was usually dry and uninteresting. One teacher went so far as to say that she considered it a plain waste of time; the class session was the most important feature of the school, and she, for one, wanted more time to "teach her class."

The meeting was about to adjourn when a young man who had recently come into the community as a teacher in the new consolidated high school, and who for two Sundays had served as teacher of the Young People's Class, asked permission to speak.

"I wonder," he began as everybody settled back to hear what the newcomer had to say, "if we have realized that in the so-called opening exercise we have the opportunity for a really worth-while worship service."

"A worship service!" exclaimed the superintendent. "Everybody would soon get tired of doing nothing but pray."

"Surely, you do not think of worship," continued the young man, "as being limited to saying prayers. To me, worship means—well, worship means much in addition to the saying of prayers."

"Tell us what worship means." Two or three

teachers were speaking at once, but the young man had already said more than he intended.

Turning to the superintendent, he said: "I doubt if any one of us can describe what worship really means in our lives without taking a little time to think the matter over. If it meets the approval of the other officers and teachers, I would like to suggest that we meet again next week for the purpose of trying to find out the meaning of worship. To make the purpose of our meeting perfectly clear, I move that we discuss the question, What happens when we worship?"

The meeting adjourned with the teacher of the Intermediate boys saying: "That is a good question. I have been wanting to help the members of my class take greater interest in the regular Church services. This discussion ought to help me. I will certainly be there."

What Happens When We Worship?

At the meeting a week later, the high school teacher was appointed to lead the discussion. He plunged right into the heart of the problem by insisting that each person present face squarely and answer to the best of his ability the question, "What happens when we worship?" It was a hard question. No one seemed willing to venture an answer.

The leader emphasized his question by making it even more personal. "What happens *to me* when I worship?"

"It makes you feel good," finally suggested the teacher of the Primary Class.

"It makes you feel mighty mean, sometimes." This from the secretary.

"I should think it would make *you* feel mean, after the way" —

The leader arose with a smile. "That is true," he said; "but why does the worship experience make one feel so mean sometimes?"

"Because it makes us realize that we are in the presence of God," replied the secretary.

"Not only that," interrupted the teacher of the Intermediate boys, "but I am always able to see the facts of everyday life in a clearer light when I am worshiping. Just last Sunday, while we were singing the hymn 'A Charge to Keep I Have,' my work as a Sunday school teacher seemed to stand out before my eyes in clearer light than ever before. Then and there, I dedicated all the resources of my life to the task of making myself a better teacher."

"You are on the right track," replied the leader. "In fact, you have mentioned *two* very important things that happen when we worship. Not only do we see the facts of life more distinctly in the clear light of God's presence, but this vision of everyday tasks is followed naturally by a desire to give our lives as colaborers with God in building a Christian world."

"One other question, What happened when you dedicated your life to the task of becoming a better teacher?"

For a moment the teacher of the Intermediate boys was silent. Then, as a light spread over his face he

answered: "Never in my life have I felt so perfectly at home in the presence of God."

"You are exactly right," exclaimed the leader. "Worship is such an intimate experience of fellowship with God that we should feel very much at home in his presence. St. Paul was thinking of this experience when he reminded the Philippians of the peace that passeth understanding (Phil. 4: 7).

"But before we close the discussion, suppose we list the various things that members of the group have described as happening in the worship experience.

"1. *The worshiper realizes that he is in the presence of God.* In the language of the old prophet, he sees the Lord 'high and lifted up.'

"2. *The worshiper feels his own unworthiness.* The contrast of his life with the goodness of God is so great that a feeling of humility and unworthiness sweeps over him.

"3. *The worshiper sees the realities of life in a clearer light than ever before.* That is, he begins to see that Christian worship is something more than singing praises about the greatness and goodness of God. There is work to be done and there are wrongs to be righted, not only in the world at large, but in his own community. And in doing this work and righting these wrongs, God needs our help.

"4. *The worshiper dedicates himself to the task of helping God in building a better world.* This dedication should be in terms of some immediate task.

"5. *A feeling of peace fills the worshiper's life.* This is the peace that comes to the man who, knowing the

difficulties and dangers in the way of life goes on unafraid because his life is dedicated to doing the will of God."

As the leader finished writing this analysis of the worship experience on the blackboard, the pastor suggested that there was one other factor that should be included.

"What is that?" asked several voices.

"It has been my experience," continued the pastor, "that I worship most effectively when I *want* to worship."

"That is a good suggestion," responded the leader; "and back of it is the principle that is sometimes described as one of the laws of learning. That is, we learn most effectively when we *want* to learn."

"Then, worship is really an experience in which we are supposed to learn?" questioned the teacher of Intermediate boys.

"To be sure. Why not?"

"Well, that is a new idea to me."

"No, it isn't new," explained the leader. "You pointed out earlier in the discussion that the worship experience always helped you to understand more clearly the work that you should do with your class of boys. That was learning in the real sense of the word."

"Well, if that is true, from this time on I am going to take a greater interest in the worship services of the Church and Sunday school. Certainly there are a great many things that I *need* to learn."

"What are some of them?" asked the leader.

"Let me illustrate from my own experience: I am trying to live the Christian life, but I find it difficult to

feel and think and act as a Christian in all the relationships of daily life. Now, it seems clear to me that Christian worship should help me to feel as a Christian should toward God and my fellow man; that it should help me to think through the issues and problems of life more clearly; and finally, that it should help me to want to go out into our community and act as a Christian man should."

"That is a good statement of some of the things that we should learn through worship. I suggest that we keep them in mind as we plan the worship services of the Church and Sunday school," suggested the pastor.

"One moment," interrupted the leader. "Before we close the discussion I want to call your attention to the fact that we have unconsciously placed fellowship with God at the very center of the worship experience."

"That is exactly as it should be in Christian worship," exclaimed the pastor.

"I am sure that you are stating a fundamental truth," continued the leader; "but I am wondering if the reason back of the failure of many people to worship effectively isn't their false ideas about God and his part in the worship experience."

"You may be right," answered the pastor. "I suggest that we discuss this question at our next meeting."

God in Christian Worship

At the beginning of the next meeting the leader opened the discussion with this question: "Since fellowship with God is at the very center of Christian

worship, is it not necessary for those who would worship most effectively to have a Christian conception of God?"

"What do you mean by that term?" asked the secretary.

"I'm glad you asked that question," replied the leader. "'The Christian conception of God' is not only a big phrase, but it is packed full of meaning. We are using it here to include *all* that we think of God as *being* and *doing*."

"O," exclaimed the secretary, "you mean your *idea of God*."

"That's it. Everything that one thinks of as being a part of God's character, or a part of his dealings with men—all this goes to make up one's conception of God.

"With that point clearly in mind, suppose we turn to the New Testament for a picture of the God revealed through the life and teachings of Jesus."

The discussion ran through two full evenings. The members of the group were surprised again and again to find that their conceptions of God were based upon the Old Testament rather than upon the teachings of Jesus. At the close, the leader summed up the discussion in the following way:

"1. *The God revealed by Jesus is a loving Father.* Most of us think of God as a loving heavenly Father in a vague, indefinite sort of way. We know that he 'so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish,' but that was two thousand years ago, and somehow it is difficult for us to think of God really loving us here and now.

"2. *He is a wise and just Father.* Judging from the prayers one often hears in Sunday school and church, God is seldom thought of as a *wise* Father. He is advised to do this, and begged to do that, until any attempt on his part to answer these prayers would result in disaster. Much of our lack of faith in God's willingness to answer prayer is due to our offering such prayers as would bring disaster upon us if they were answered in the way and manner that we seem to expect.

"God, the loving Father, is not only wise in his dealings with men, but he is also fair and just. Men often deal unfairly with God in ways that on the surface seem to have little to do with religion. Using the best of the crops for one's own pleasure is dealing unfairly with God. Working so hard through the week that we are too tired to take our place in the Sunday school and church is dealing unjustly both with God and ourselves.

"Sometimes, the ordinary events of life are so interpreted as to make God appear to deal unfairly with his children. An accident in which a child is killed is explained as being God's way of punishing a wicked father. A storm, an illness, or misfortune of any kind is interpreted as being a special punishment sent by God. On the other hand, the blessings of life are interpreted as special presents from God for being good. He is made to appear as giving some people far more than they deserve simply because they have kept from doing wrong.

"3. *He is the Father of all men.* Jesus taught us to say *our* Father. Most of us say *our* with our lips and think *my* in our hearts. The prayer of the man who

prayed fervently, 'O Lord, save me and my wife; my son John and his wife; us four, and no more,' is illustrative of the spirit of much of our thinking about God in his relations toward other men.

"God loves every person in the world equally. This does not mean that he loves the wicked ways of men. It is the person who is loved, not his sinful thoughts and deeds.

"The Christian religion is for *all* men. And he who would make the realities of this religion his own must be willing to share with God the Father sincere love for all men everywhere.

"The sharing of God's blessings with others must be more than vague expressions of good wishes. It must take the form of *active good will* toward all from the humblest neighbor to the members of other races in distant lands.

"4. *He is God the Father almighty.* The triumphs of men over the forces of nature have been so wonderful in the last few years that now almost everything is taken for granted. Earth and sea and air have yielded up their mysteries until man, the master, is in danger of thinking that there is no need for God to rule over all.

"In this day of dependence upon self there is need for man to learn afresh the lesson of awe and reverence that moved the Psalmist to write: 'The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork' (Ps. 19: 1).

"5. *He is a colaborer with men.* Our highest privilege is that of working with God in the making of a better world. Jesus worked *with* his disciples. In such events

as the feeding of the five thousand we are plainly taught that God does not do for men the things that they can do for themselves.

"Everywhere about us we see evidences of God's willingness to coöperate with men. Not an ear of corn ripens to maturity nor a boll of cotton opens to the sun without God's depending upon the help of man. The farmer, above all others, enjoys not only the privilege of being a fellow laborer with God, but in a very real sense he has the honor of sharing with God in the miracle of creation. To those who work with him, God fulfills the promise of his presence made to the disciples nearly two thousand years ago, 'Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world' (Matt. 28: 20)."

What Worship Means to Me

The leader brought the discussion to a close one evening with this statement: "After all this discussion about what happens in worship, and God's part in it, let each one of us ask himself a very personal question: 'What does worship mean to me?'"

The teacher of the Intermediate boys was the first to answer. "Here is a statement," he said, "that expresses exactly the meaning of worship to me."

"Read it to us."

"It is very brief: 'Worship is the *practice* of the presence of God.'"

"Worship is coming to mean more than the practice of the presence of God to me," exclaimed the pastor. "Christian worship must be purposeful; that is, if the practice of the presence of God is to be truly worshipful

in our lives, we must seek his presence for the *definite purpose of bringing our wills, our feelings, our motives, our purposes, our acts—our entire lives—into harmony with the will and purpose of God.* To me, it is a very personal experience. It demands the best of my thinking. It helps me to face the problems of life and gives me the courage to go out and help my neighbors join with the heavenly Father in building a Christian world."

"The pastor has expressed my thinking exactly," said the superintendent, "and it helps me to understand that one may worship in the privacy of his room or out in the fields alone with God just as certainly as in the Church service on Sunday morning."

"That is true," responded the leader, "but it is well for us to keep in mind the fact that we *need* to share in both private and group worship experiences. There are times, of course, when this fellowship with God is best expressed in a very intimate and personal manner; that is, with only God and the worshiper present. Then, there are other times when fellowship with him finds its highest expression in company with one's fellow man; that is, in organized group worship.

"The organized worship services of Church and Sunday school should not only provide the individual with the opportunity for actual worship experiences in company with his fellow workers, but should encourage him in the practice of private worship by suggesting ways and means of sharing in purposeful fellowship with God."

CHAPTER II

THE PLACE OF WORSHIP IN THE WORK OF THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Purpose of the Sunday School

Why have worship services in the Sunday school? Do they not take time that could better be given to the teaching of the lesson in the classes?

Before answering these important questions, let us ask another: *Why have Sunday school at all?*

To many persons, the answer is simple and easy. The business of the Sunday school is to teach the Bible. And by *teaching* the Bible they mean that the pupils are led by the teacher to repeat a few of the truths contained in it. It is expected, of course, that these truths will bear fruit some day in Christian living, but little or no effort is made to help the pupil understand their meaning in his life here and now. The Sunday school, therefore, is doing about all that can be expected of it when it requires the boys and girls to memorize a few verses of Scripture and gives the older men and women an opportunity to hear Squire Jones or Judge Smith lecture for thirty minutes each Sunday.

But an increasing number of persons are becoming dissatisfied with the kind of Sunday school that does nothing more than provide for *teaching* a lesson in a cold and mechanical way. To them, the Sunday school should be a living, growing institution. It should be concerned with teaching its pupils to know more about

the Bible, to be sure; but it should also help them to think and feel and act as Christians in every relationship of life.

This conception of the Sunday school as an institution for helping people think and feel and act as Christians broadens the scope of its work. No longer can the superintendent and the teachers be satisfied with providing only for the teaching of the lesson in class groups. Every minute of the Sunday school hour must be taken into account and used in the best possible way.

And when that is done, the Sunday school has just begun its work. Religious education is not limited to an hour on Sunday morning or to the spot in the community upon which the church building happens to stand; it has to do with every hour of the day and every act of life. While the Sunday school cannot organize and control all the activities of the community, it can plan the work that it does control so that its influence will reach into every phase of community life. In a real sense, therefore, the Sunday school is engaged in training the entire local church and community in the Christian way of living and may properly be called the *Church school.*

The Sunday school of the small Church is particularly responsible for the religious training of the entire community. In most instances, it is the only organization of the Church that maintains anything like regular contacts with its constituency. It includes all age-groups in its membership and is thereby in position to train the entire family.

Why Provide for Worship in the Sunday School?

Let us now go back to the question that was raised at the beginning of the chapter: *Why have worship services in the Sunday school?*

There are at least two good reasons:

1. *Worship is in itself an effective means of training persons in the Christian way of life.* In helping people to learn to live as Christians the Sunday school must provide ways and means of helping them to practice the thinking of Christian thoughts, to practice Christian attitudes toward all men, and to share in acts of love and sacrificial service.

Men are brought face to face with these fundamental issues of life in Christian worship. That is, in the worship experience the emphasis is placed not upon telling a man how he ought to feel and act toward God and his fellow man, but upon *helping him to feel and act as he ought.*

Worship is, therefore, an experience in which persons *actually learn* the fundamentals of Christian living just as effectively as in the more commonly recognized ways of teaching. No Sunday school worker can afford to overlook the opportunities of character development through Christian worship both in his own life and in the lives of his pupils.

2. *No other institution in the community is in position to provide opportunities for worship at such frequent and regular intervals as the Sunday school.* This is especially true of the small Sunday school. It meets every week,

and in many instances there are no other religious services in the community.

While men may find abundant opportunities for private worship in their homes and places of business, there is need for young and old to come together at regular intervals in group worship. It is not only the privilege of the Sunday school in the open country and village church to provide this opportunity, but in so doing it may train the people in worship so that the effectiveness of their private devotions will be greatly increased.

Worship and the Total School Program

Worship touches and influences the work of the small Sunday school at many points. In fact, the total school program should be thought of as a unit and worship given its proper place in relation to all other activities rather than thinking of it as something to be brought in from the outside.

This means that the worship service at the opening of the school should be planned as a vital part of the Sunday session. Teachers and pupils should be led to regard it as much a part of the work of the Sunday school as is the class session.

1. *Worship and Study Activities.*—But the worship experience is not limited to the opening service of the school. Many teachers are finding that brief moments of worship at the beginning or at intervals during the class session are very helpful. It is needless to say that this worship in the class should always be perfectly natural. It may occur in connection with some problem

or felt need in the work of the class; but whatever happens, it should never be forced.

Instead of the teacher feeling that he *should* begin or close the class session with prayer, he and the pupils should be so familiar with the value of worship in meeting the issues and solving the problems of the class group that they will regard a moment of prayer as a priceless privilege rather than as a duty. (See Chapter XI for further suggestions.)

2. *Worship and Service Activities.*—More and more, Sunday school workers are learning that worth-while character cannot be developed simply by talking to boys and girls about its beautiful qualities. Life cannot be broken up into parts which are kept separate from one another. The *whole* boy, not just parts of him, goes to Sunday school, plays ball, runs errands—does everything.

The Sunday school, therefore, is concerned not only with what happens during the session of the school on Sunday morning, but with *every activity* in which its pupils and teachers engage during the other one hundred and sixty-seven hours of the week.

This means that the Sunday school either as a unit or through class groups will carry on a great many enterprises outside the regular Sunday session. Some of these enterprises may take the form of a study of other lands and people and be closely connected with the regular class work. In such cases, the worship service at the opening of the school may be planned around a theme that is closely connected with the study enterprise.

Another type of activity is illustrated in the experience of the Adult class of a small school giving a day to work out the crop of a sick member. After the work was finished the group visited with their sick friend for a few moments and in a verse of a song and a brief prayer expressed their gratitude for the fellowship of the day and the hope that he might soon be strong and well again.

The opportunities for moments of worship in connection with the acts of Christian service with every individual and group in the school should make a part of their daily life are without number. A brief moment of prayer, silent or spoken, a stanza of a hymn, a kindly word, the pressure of a friendly handclasp—all may be a means of real worship both for him who gives and for him who receives.

3. *Worship and Play Activities.*—Worship and play are very closely related. In fact, the right kind of play tends to develop the same high and noble traits of character which Christian worship nurtures.

In the playing of games, the strongest of feelings surge through our lives. We want to do this or that with all our might. We *feel* intensely toward those who play with us and against us. We are moved by motives that are low and mean, or that are high and noble. Attitudes are formed toward others that make us the best of Christians or the meanest of sinners.

Every person, young and old, needs to engage in the kind of play that will help to develop the right sort of feelings, motives, and purposes. Adults, especially,

need to learn how to drop the toils and cares of daily life and give themselves to refreshing play.

And because worship and play are so closely related it should not be thought a strange thing that now and then some manifestation of the worship spirit should make itself felt in play. More than once, boys have expressed a feeling of need for divine guidance in their athletic contests. Without trying to force the outward forms of worship into the playing of games, the spirit of worship should be given full opportunity to manifest itself as boys and girls, men and women, strive in hours of play and recreation to organize the feelings, purposes, and ideals of their lives around the will of God.

Relation of Worship in the Sunday School to the Church Service

The average small Sunday school has preaching services only once or twice a month. Therefore, as has already been pointed out, the main responsibility for meeting the worship needs of the people falls upon the Sunday school. While this responsibility should be the first consideration of the leaders of the small school, yet in making the best use of this opportunity, it is well for the school to remember that it is also helping to strengthen and enrich the worship services of the regular Church hour. In fact, the Sunday school has an obligation to plan and carry out its worship services so as to add to the effectiveness of the worship in the Church service.

How may this be done?

1. *By providing for the practice of worship.* We learn

to worship by worshiping. Few people in the small Church have the opportunity of worshiping enough to feel at home in the experience. Fortunate is the pastor who on the Sundays that he is privileged to lead the entire Church in worship finds a congregation already trained in the spirit and habit of worship through their participation in the Sunday school.

2. *By providing ways of learning the materials of worship.* Familiarity with worship materials is just as necessary to the ongoing of a successful worship service as familiarity with hoes and plows is necessary to raising a crop of corn or cotton.

One reason why the worship services in the small church are often so poor and meaningless is the fact that the people are not acquainted with the hymns, the prayers, the Scriptures, and other materials that go to make a worth-while worship service.

The Sunday school offers a real opportunity for training the people in the materials of worship. People like to do the things that they can do well. It is a wise pastor who plans the regular services of the Church so as to use the prayers, the hymns, the Scripture, and the other worship materials learned in the Sunday school.

In this connection it should be pointed out that there is a growing tendency on the part of pastors and Sunday school workers throughout the Church to think of the Sunday morning program of the local Church in terms of *one unified service* rather than in terms of a Sunday school session and a preaching service.

In this unified program there is only one worship service in which the entire school takes part. This service

serves as the close of the Sunday school or teaching period and the beginning of the preaching hour.

The success of this plan depends upon the care and skill of the pastor and Sunday school workers in preparing for the service. When used as a mechanical scheme for holding the Sunday school pupils for the eleven-o'clock Church service it is a failure. On the other hand, it provides a means through which the pastor and his fellow workers in the Sunday school may combine their efforts in one united program of religious education and thereby increase the effectiveness of the Church's contribution to the religious training of the community.

CHAPTER III

MATERIALS OF WORSHIP—PRINCIPLES GOVERNING SELECTION AND USE

MEN and women who are responsible for the public worship services in the Sunday school sometimes feel that worship is associated so intimately with the presence of God that it is unnecessary to prepare for it. That is, since God is at the very center of the worship service, we can depend upon him to take charge and direct its every part. Some persons even go so far as to say that the advance selection of hymns, Scripture readings, and other materials used in the worship service is an expression of lack of faith in God. To them, God is a sort of mighty ruler who walks into the midst of the group assembled for worship and directs their activities for his own pleasure. That is, the hymns are sung, the prayers are said, and the other parts of the service are carried out solely for his benefit.

This idea of the purpose of worship is, of course, out of harmony with the character of the God that Jesus came into the world to reveal. The God revealed by Jesus is a loving heavenly Father who is deeply concerned that his children may take an intelligent as well as an active part in the upbuilding of his kingdom. It is not enough to serve God in a careless and indifferent manner; he expects us to share intelligently with him in planning and carrying forward the work of his kingdom.

The service of public worship offers one of the most

direct and practical means that the Church has at its command for helping men and women, boys and girls to share with God in this planning and carrying forward of his kingdom upon earth. To neglect the use of the worship service for this high purpose is to cause the Church to fail at the point where no other organization or institution can take its place. To enter into the worship service without carefully selecting the best available materials is to mark those who are responsible for the leadership of the service as careless and indifferent to the spiritual welfare of their fellow workers and the ongoing of the kingdom of God.

The materials of worship—the music, the prayers, the Scripture readings, the stories, the talks, and all other materials used in worship—serve as means to an end. No hymn, prayer, story, or any other material should be used for its own sake; everything that is included should be used because it makes a definite contribution to the spirit and purpose of that particular worship service.

The worship service in the Sunday school is neither the place for the display of some casual visitor in the community who happens to be able to sing a solo or give a reading, nor the time to call upon any one who has not been notified ahead of time to make a talk or offer a prayer. This should never be done, no matter how distinguished or well known the visitor may be. To do so usually embarrasses the visitor and detracts from the worship value of the service.

Why the Selection of Worship Materials Seems Difficult

The careful selection of all the materials that enter into the worship service is not so difficult as it seems on first thought. The feeling of most Sunday school workers that it is difficult is due to two or three easily overcome faults.

1. *The leader delays the selection of the materials for the worship service which he is to lead until there is not enough time left for him to make a careful selection.* He embarrasses himself and destroys the spirit of reverence by trying to find appropriate hymns and Scripture readings after the service has begun. In his haste the leader seldom, if ever, selects the most appropriate hymn or other material needed at a particular place in the worship service.

2. *Materials are selected at random without much thought as to their being suitable for worship purposes.* Not all hymns, for example, are suitable for use in a worship service. A talk or a story that may be excellent material for use in the class sessions may be everything else but the kind of talk or story that will help people to worship.

3. *The average leader of worship not only lacks information about the kind of materials that are most suitable for worship purposes, but he is unfamiliar with the best sources of these materials.* The call that perhaps comes most often to Sunday school field workers is for help in finding suitable worship materials.

These difficulties can be overcome in any Sunday

school. The selection of materials in advance of the worship service is not a difficult task. All that is necessary is for the superintendent and his fellow workers who help him in planning the worship services to make up their minds that they are going to do it. An hour's meeting once a month in which the superintendent helps those who are to lead worship services during that month to prepare the main outline of their services and a few minutes each Sunday to complete the details for the following Sunday's program will accomplish wonders in improving the worship service of the average Sunday school.

The more serious difficulty of getting acquainted with the principles underlying the selection and use of worship materials, as well as learning where to find these materials, can be overcome by reading and study. To help Sunday school workers overcome this difficulty, the remainder of this chapter is devoted to a discussion of some of the principles underlying the selection and use of materials, while Chapters IV, V, and VI offer a great many specific suggestions in the application of these principles.

Guiding Principles in Selecting Worship Materials

1. *Select all materials which are to be used in a given worship service as far ahead of time as possible.* Nothing adds to the effectiveness of a worship service quite so much as the evidence from the very beginning that careful preparation has been made for it. Every time the leader betrays his lack of preparation by turning

through his songbook looking for the next hymn, or walks across the room to hand somebody a leaflet from which to read, he makes it just that much more difficult for the group to worship. Quite often a worship service is seriously hindered by a few minutes' delay at the beginning while the leader hustles around handing out "parts" and finding hymn books. Such activity always impresses those present with the fact that adequate preparation has not been made for the service and thereby hinders their whole-hearted coöperation.

2. *Select all materials in harmony with a central thought, or theme.* The first step in the planning of worship services is the selection of a theme or subject for each service. This should be done by the superintendent and his fellow workers several weeks in advance. The selection of themes in advance not only makes possible the planning of worship services that are constructive and closely related to one another, but it gives time for the leaders to select and prepare the best possible material.

Once a theme has been selected, the leader should strive to select all his materials in harmony with this theme. The music, the Scripture readings, the talks, the stories, the prayer, and all other materials used in the service should be selected with the purpose of helping to develop the central thought of the service. For example, suppose that the theme of the service is "Reverence for God's House"; the materials used should either directly or indirectly express the attitude of reverence. There would be no place in a service of this kind for harsh and extremely loud music or for a

talk on "The Next Sunday School Picnic." It would be the time, however, for music and talks and prayers that express the reverence of men's hearts for the house of God.

3. *Select materials within the range of the understanding of the younger age-groups taking part in the service.* The Sunday school meeting in a one-room church faces the problem of having all age-groups in one worship service. This situation adds to the difficulty of selecting worship materials. For example, a great many hymns suitable for adult worship services are beyond the ability of small children to sing and understand. Again, young children have not had the experiences that would enable them to understand many of the prayers which we use in services for adults.

We face a practical difficulty here. What is the best thing to do?

Of course, the *best* thing to do is to provide additional rooms so that the younger groups can have worship services wholly suited to their needs. But that is impractical, or even impossible, in many places where the Sunday school membership is small and its resources are limited.

The next best thing to do is to plan the worship service so that all, even the younger children, will have a part in it and be helped by it.

Perhaps the most important part of planning a service that will be helpful to all is the selection of suitable songs, Scripture readings, talks, stories, prayers, and other worship materials. Here, as elsewhere in the work of the small school, a little study and planning will

go a long way toward making the best out of the materials that are at hand. Put the emphasis upon selecting materials that the younger boys and girls will understand. Use the stories from the Bible that boys and girls love and understand. Never buy a hymn book without a goodly number of worth-while songs for children. Plan talks and select stories that deal with the experiences in home and community life that boys and girls are familiar with. Do these things, and you will be surprised at the increased helpfulness of the worship services for both children and adults.

Principles Governing the Use of Worship Materials

1. *Use only such materials as make a positive contribution to the worship service.* Worship services are frequently ruined by dragging in a "special number" of some sort that has no positive contribution whatever to make to the spirit or purpose of the service. A good question to ask in judging all worship material is, "In what way will this song, or talk, or prayer, or whatever material is before us, help in creating a spirit of worship and in developing the theme of the service?" If it does not tend to do both of these things, it should be omitted.

It is this principle that rules out the making of announcements during the worship service. They neither add to the spirit of worship nor help to develop the theme of the service. In almost all instances they detract from the service by directing the attention of the people to something else.

All necessary announcements should be made either

in the classes or during a period set aside from the worship hour for miscellaneous business.

2. *Use the materials that the school as a whole is acquainted with.* The attempted use of songs, Scripture readings, and other materials with which the people are not acquainted, turns the attention of the worshipers from the experience of worship to the fact that they are unfamiliar with the materials being used. Just as a housewife does not become a good cook until she is thoroughly familiar with the materials which she must use in the preparation of a meal, so the worshiper does not worship in the fullest sense until he has become thoroughly familiar with the materials of worship.

The worship service is not the proper time for the school to learn new materials. For the leader to stop in the midst of the singing of a hymn to say, "Now, we don't know this song very well; let's sing that first stanza over again," is to kill whatever spirit of worship may be present. In the event that an unfamiliar hymn is selected, a change should be made, with as little confusion as possible, to one that is familiar.[1]

3. *Use the same worship materials in a variety of ways.* The logical development of the worship experience makes necessary the use of certain kinds of materials at different stages in the worship services. It is the violation of this principle that causes such disastrous results to follow the efforts of some leaders to secure "variety" in their services. In an effort to increase

[1] Chapter IX deals with this important problem of training the members of the Sunday school in the basic materials of worship.

interest in the worship service they try to "pep" it up in all sorts of ways. Noisy songs are sung with the emphasis upon the *noise.* Spectacular "stunts" are indulged in to attract the attention of the worshipers. Of course, their attention *is* attracted to something else; but the worship service suffers as a result.

On the other hand, it is possible to have wholesome variety without detracting from the spirit or purpose of the service. The playing of the music of a hymn, for example, while the group follows the words silently is an effective contrast to the usual method of singing the stanzas. It is particularly effective with hymns of prayer and meditation.

The variety of ways in which the Scriptures may be used effectively is almost without number. The usual plan of reading the Scriptures responsively is not very effective at best because most persons watch the verses ahead to be sure that they can pronounce all the hard words and thereby lose the thought of the passage completely. A better method is to have the entire group read all the selection together and in unison.

Still another effective method of using the Scriptures in the worship service is to have some one repeat the substance of the selection in his own words. This places the emphasis upon getting the meaning of the passage into our own thoughts and words and is a help to a great many people.

Where to Find Worship Materials

Most of us think of the Bible and the hymn book as being the major sources of worship materials. And they

are our best and richest sources of supply. But they are not the only sources by any means.

The whole realm of music is at our command: not only songs and hymns, but instrumental music as well. Everybody loves and responds to music. The Church has a wonderful opportunity through its worship services of creating a love for and understanding of the best in music.

Books are another rich field of worship materials. Biographies of the heroic men and women who have given their lives in the service of righteous causes provide rich resources for stories and talks in the worship services. Books of poems offer the leader of worship the opportunity to find a stanza or a longer selection that will enrich the service wonderfully.

Magazines and even the newspapers will yield bountiful results to the person who makes it a habit to watch for helpful suggestions. Leaders of worship will also find the *International Journal of Religious Education*[2] and their denominational magazines rich in helpful worship materials.[3]

There is one source of supply that most of us overlook. The world of nature is rich in worship materials. And here the country church is abundantly richer than its city neighbor. Quite often, the country church is

[2] The address of the *International Journal of Religious Education* is 5 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

[3] Workers in Sunday schools of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, will find the *Workers' Council* and the *Elementary Teacher* especially helpful. Order from Lamar and Whitmore, 810 Broadway, Nashville, Tenn.

located in a grove of trees, and with a little planning in cleaning up the grounds and planting flowers it may be greatly improved as a place of worship.

A grove of trees was doubtless man's first temple of worship; in the country church it would be entirely feasible for the Sunday school membership to meet occasionally in some near-by grove or upon some convenient hilltop and hold their worship services there. Services at sunrise or early twilight are especially effective.

The hymn book, the Bible, books and magazines, music, the world of nature, and life all about us are all rich with materials that will help Sunday schools and Churches to worship effectively. They are there for him who hath eyes to see. In the language of Jesus, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see." (Matt. 13: 16.)

CHAPTER IV

MATERIALS OF WORSHIP—PRAYER

The Meaning of Prayer

WHAT are we doing when we pray?

Most of us would answer this question by saying that prayer is asking God for something. And to many people, prayer is just that and nothing more. To them it is a sort of glorified begging contest in which they persist in asking God for the things which they want until he yields to their requests very much as a tired human father responds to the pleadings of a spoiled child.

All of us, when we stop to think about it, know that real Christian prayer is something far more meaningful than pestering God until he changes his mind and comes around to grant our wishes. We know that real prayer is the very heart of the worship experience, and without it the worship service is just about as cold and lifeless as a human body without a beating, throbbing heart.

As Sunday school workers we not only want to know the meaning of real prayer from first-hand experience, but we want to help our pupils and our fellow workers in the Church to share in its blessings. May each of us, therefore, ask himself the very personal question, "What does prayer mean to me?"

A group of Sunday school workers was discussing this question one day when one of the number described prayer as "opening the life to God and keeping it

open." She had been reading a little book by Mabel N. Thurston called "The Adventure of Prayer," and to help the other members of the group to understand the full meaning of her statement she read the following paragraph from this book:

"None of us could be well very long in a house whose doors and windows were kept tightly closed so that no fresh air could enter in; whose shades were all kept down so that no light could reach us. Our bodies are made so that they need both fresh air and sunlight in order to keep healthy. Now, suppose you were shut up in a tightly closed house like that and felt yourself getting sick. You realized that you were growing weaker and weaker, so you prayed to God to make you well. Would God 'answer' that prayer? Certainly not by any miracle. *But he would be trying to answer it all the time in another way.* Every minute of the day the fresh air would be trying to get into your house—creeping through every tiniest crack and crevice; every hour of sunshine the health-giving light would be shining against your windows. *You could pray forever and get no 'answer' until you opened your doors and windows and let the light and air in.* As soon as you did that your health would begin to come back to you. God never does anything for us that we can do for ourselves. He will furnish the air and the sunshine which no power of man can make, but *we must open our own windows.*"[1]

Is not that a good picture of what real prayer is?

[1] From "The Adventure of Prayer," by Mabel N. Thurston. Copyright by Fleming H. Revell Company. Used by permission.

Not only opening doors and windows so that fresh air and sunlight can enter in, but opening every avenue of one's life to the presence and power of God. There is a famous painting by one of the old masters illustrating the passage of Scripture, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." In this picture the door has no *outside* knob or latch by which it may be opened. *It can be opened only from the inside.* Jesus does not force himself into the heart and life of any man; he patiently awaits the time when we willingly open the door unto him.

Another very intimate and meaningful way to describe real prayer is found in the writings of one of the early Church fathers, Clement of Alexandria. As he phrased it, prayer is "conversation with God."

Prayer is the most intimate and personal of all religious acts. Just as we open the door of our homes and cordially welcome our dearest earthly friend to share the best of all that we have, so do we open the door of our lives in prayer to the presence of God our heavenly Father and dearest Friend. And just as we would sit down with this earthly friend to talk over the most intimate and personal matters, so in prayer we talk with God about any and all of our problems, our sorrows, and our joys.

Does prayer include asking God for things? Certainly, but not in the sense of begging him into doing something that is not good for us or his kingdom. In real prayer one asks God for things in the same way that he asks a very dear friend—that is, one never asks his dearest friend to do things he can do for himself, and one never asks for selfish gifts. Remove

these selfish petitions from our prayers and some of us would have very little left. But it is just there that we need to change our prayers.

Does God always answer prayer? He does, provided the person praying is trying earnestly to find God and to do his will. There is never a real prayer, no matter how poor or ignorant, that God does not answer. The answer may not be "yes," and it may sometimes be "no." It may be in some other way from that which we were expecting, but the supreme truth of all prayer is that God *really* answers.

How can God hear and answer so many prayers at one and the same time? Our trouble here is in thinking of God in the same terms as we think of men. A man can attend to only one thing at a time, because his capacities and abilities are limited; but God, who is unlimited in capacity and ability, can look after any number of things. We have radios in our homes operated by distant broadcasting stations. Our set may be the only one operated by the energy sent out from the particular station to which we are tuned, but in all probability there are thousands of other sets being operated by this same station and at the same time with our set. And as others are tuned in they, too, are operated just as efficiently as ours. If this impersonal force radiated from the broadcasting station can thus successfully operate thousands of radio sets located in all parts of the world, is there any need for us to doubt that God, who is not only a mighty Force, but a Person, can hear and answer the prayers of *all* his children?

Since God knows what is best for us, what need is there for prayer anyhow? Would you accept a gift of a million dollars without thanking the giver? You would be a very ungrateful person, if you did. Then, why accept all the gifts that come from God without pausing now and then to thank him? It just would not be fair, would it?

But thanking God for his blessings is not the main reason for prayer. The basis for that reason we have tried to point out in describing what prayer really is. *The real reason for praying is that we may know better how to live.* Of all persons who have lived upon this earth, Jesus knew more about how to live than any one else. Outstanding among all the methods which he used to attain this end was that of prayer. He spent more time in prayer than any other man of whom we have the record. Surely, if he found in prayer the means for understanding the meaning of life and doing his work more effectively, his followers will at least give a little time to the practice that he found so helpful.

It is true that we can never explain all the mysteries connected with the prayer life. At least, we cannot in this world. But the way to learn more about anything is to use what knowledge we now have. The way to know the power of prayer is to begin now to use the resources that we have. No truer statement is found in the Scriptures than the passage, "Unto everyone which hath shall be given." The intelligent use of what we have is the surest road to the possession of greater power.

The Use of Prayer in the Worship Service

The personal and intimate nature of prayer makes it a very important element in the public worship service. There are two places particularly in the service where prayer aids in the development of the worship experience as nothing else can.

The first of these occurs early in the service and has the twofold purpose of providing an opportunity for every person present to take part in the service and of helping the group to realize that they are in the actual presence of God.

The second place of importance for the use of public prayer in the worship service is near, or at, the close. The complete development of the worship experience demands that there shall be opportunity for the worshipers to commit themselves to a worth-while cause. This opportunity should always be very near the end of the service. There is no better way of providing for it than through a few moments of silent meditation with a brief and definite prayer of consecration at the close in which the leader commits the group to the task of making the attitudes and the ideals that have been formed during the service carry over into everyday life.

Various types of prayers may be used in the public worship service. One good plan is to use a group prayer in the early part of the service. That is, this prayer should be one that every one knows and in which the group may join with the leader. The Lord's Prayer

when prayed in unison is an example of this type of prayer.

In addition to the Lord's Prayer, every Sunday school should memorize a number of unison prayers suitable for use on different occasions. A few prayers suitable for use in this way are included in the Appendix. Others may be found in any good book of prayers. From time to time it will be wise to encourage various groups in the school, especially the young people, to prepare prayers that may be used in the worship services. Prayers that are prepared in this way and used reverently are just as much an expression of God's will for his people as any volunteer prayer delivered without time for careful preparation. In fact, we need to encourage our young people to give serious thought and time to the careful preparation of the prayers through which they undertake to lead the Sunday school in conversation with God.

Characteristics of Prayers that Are Most Helpful in the Worship Service

1. *Public prayer should be brief and to the point.* Long and rambling prayers in which the leader prays about everything under the sun have no place in public worship services. This is particularly true where there are restless boys and girls and little children present. Public prayer should never be used as a means of advising God about the affairs of men. Neither should it be used to say things about our neighbors that we would not dare say to their faces.

The public prayer provides an opportunity for leading

the group into the presence of God. The leader has the privilege of acting as the spokesman of the group in their conversation with God, and he should value this privilege so highly that he will not only be brief, but endeavor to center every word of the prayer directly around the theme of the worship service. Whenever the leader of worship calls upon another person to lead a prayer he should always inform that person well in advance in order that he may have sufficient time to prepare for leading a prayer in harmony with the theme of the service.

2. *Public prayer should be simple in language.* The person who leads a public prayer should always remember that he is leading the *entire* group and that simple language is best understood by all. The use of long words and stilted sentences tends to attract the attention of the worshipers from the real meaning and purpose of the prayer and should be avoided.

Short, simple sentences with words that are easily understood by all are always best in public prayer.

3. *Public prayer should be true to the needs of life.* It may seem unnecessary to call attention to the fact that prayers should express the needs of the persons actually present in the service, but a few moments spent in listening to public prayers will reveal the fact that the vast majority of them fail at this point. A public prayer is supposed to lead the men and women and the boys and girls actually present into a closer fellowship with God, and should not be given over to efforts to please some imaginary group of persons with nice-sounding compliments. The leader should, therefore,

formulate his prayer in terms of the interests and the needs of those who are present.

4. *Public prayer should be addressed to God, the Father.* Jesus gave us the supreme example of how to begin our prayers when he taught us to say, "Our Father." Not only in the beginning of the public prayer, but whenever it is necessary throughout the prayer to address Deity, it should be done in terms of God, the heavenly Father.

While public prayers should be conversational in tone, the pronoun "You" should not be used in talking to God. The pronoun "Thou" should always be used. Too frequent references to God in praying are in bad taste and tend to destroy the effectiveness of the prayer. The frequent use of such expressions as "Glory," "Hallelujah," "For Jesus' sake," and "Amen" tends to destroy the spirit and meaning of the public prayer. Certainly, prayers should be sincerely fervent, but the real spirit of prayer is expressed best by the tone and attitude of one's prayer rather than by the use of mere words.

5. *Public prayer should express reverence, praise, loyalty, and obedience rather than fear and doubt.* Prayers in the worship service are not the place for expressing one's doubts and fears. Any lack of confidence on the part of the leader in the power and willingness of God to bless his children is sure to convey itself to the other worshipers and draw a veil between them and the presence of God. The supreme qualification of the leader of public prayer is an unquestioning confidence in the power and presence of God.

This leadership should express itself in terms of

love, reverence, praise, loyalty, and obedience to the will of God. Jesus taught us this lesson when under the very shadow of the cross he prayed "Thy will, not mine, be done." It is in love that God answers prayer, and we may be sure that he gives his love, although he may be unable to grant the thing for which we pray.

Then, if we would know the meaning of real fellowship with God, we must approach him in perfect confidence and trust. To seek his presence in a half-hearted way is to make it impossible for him to bless us. If we would know the blessing of real fellowship with God, we must take the confident and trustful attitude of the writer of the following lines:

"Shall we not open the human heart,
Spread its doors until the hinges start?
Stop our worrying, doubt, and din,
Hunting heaven and dodging sin?
There is no need to look so wide:
Open the door and stand aside—
And God comes in!"[2]

Helping Sunday School Pupils to Learn the Real Meaning of Christian Prayer

In the first place, there is not much value in talking *about* prayer, or in telling people that they *ought* to pray. Jesus did not tell his disciples that they ought to pray; he simply practiced praying until they began to see that there was something wonderfully helpful in it.

[2] Author unknown. Quoted in "The Adventure of Prayer," by Mabel N. Thurston. Copyright by Fleming H. Revell Company.

The best way, therefore, to teach others to know the real meaning of prayer is to help them to practice the experience of prayer. This means that we must include all members of our family, our class, or our Sunday school in the actual experience of prayer.

How can this be done?

First, we can include in the prayer experience the members of the group that we are trying to teach to pray by inviting them to name the things for which they would like the leader to pray. All sorts of things may be suggested, especially by younger groups; but that is perfectly all right. These suggestions will help the leader to pray in terms of the actual needs and experiences of the group and will help to get our prayers out of the usual ruts.

In one Sunday school, a boy asked the superintendent to pray for his dog which had been run over by an automobile and seriously injured. Did the superintendent ignore this request as being unworthy? He most certainly did not! In a simple and earnest manner he thanked God for the fine comradeship that existed between the boy and his dog and prayed that the boy might do everything possible to relieve the dog's suffering and that everybody might learn to love and appreciate the fine qualities of good dogs.

In another school, a man asked that the leader pray for rain to save his crops. Here again, the leader prayed, not for the direct blessing, but for skill on the part of the farmer to meet the actual conditions of life and maintain the right attitude toward them and their Maker no matter what might happen.

Second, one of the best ways to learn to pray is *to pray*. Anything that we can do to encourage people to lead a group in prayer is usually helpful. Some people are so shy and backward about speaking in a public place that the leadership of public prayer is very difficult for them. We should never make the mistake of suggesting that their inability to pray in public is due to their lack of prayer in private. Rather, we should give ourselves to helping them find the joy and blessing of the prayer experience so that their embarrassment in leading public prayer may disappear.

To help timid persons gain confidence in themselves it is sometimes wise to ask them to read a prayer that has been prepared by some other person or taken from a book of prayers. Or, the person himself may be encouraged to write out a prayer and read it rather than try to pray impromptu. In this connection, many Sunday school teachers have found it helpful to ask their pupils to join in the preparation of a prayer for a certain occasion. The experience gained in formulating the prayer is in reality a very vital experience in prayer.

Third, we may help others to enter into the meaning of prayer through the use of memorized prayers. While it is true that memorized prayers when used over and over again tend to become mechanical and meaningless, yet they do have a real value in worship by helping us to say the things that we want to say in a dignified and reverent way.

Prayers of this kind are especially valuable for use in the early part of the worship service when there is

need for the entire group to join in some act that recognizes the presence of God in the service.

Another type of unison prayer that may profitably be used by even the smallest Sunday school is the prayer sentence set to music. "The Lord Bless You and Keep You,"[3] and "We Give Thee but Thine Own"[4] are familiar examples. These responses are especially helpful in connection with the offering and as a response following the prayer of the leader of worship.

[3] No. 748, in the Methodist Hymnal.

[4] No. 688, in the Methodist Hymnal.

CHAPTER V

MATERIALS OF WORSHIP—MUSIC

Music is called the universal language. It breaks across the barriers of race and color and gives expression to the deepest feelings of mankind.

A story of pioneer days illustrates the universality of the language that music speaks. A little band of white men were making camp after a hard day's journey. Scarcely had the camp fires been lighted when a party of fiercely painted Indians filed from a near-by ravine and prepared to make camp a short distance away. Grimly, the white men prepared to defend themselves against the expected attack. Wagons were drawn up in a circle, fires were extinguished, and weapons made ready for instant use.

But the Indians seemed in no hurry to attack. Their camp fires blazed merrily. The evening meal was prepared and eaten. Then the white men heard them singing. Guns were gripped more tightly; surely, thought the travelers, this is the beginning of the attack. The singing grew louder and louder. Still there was no sign of an attack.

Suddenly, there came a strangely familiar note in the savage music. The men who a moment before were prepared to sell their lives as dearly as possible sat up to listen the more intently. Then, with a smile on their faces, they laid aside their weapons and reached for their blankets. The Indians were singing "In the Sweet

By and By." Some wandering missionary had taught these savages this great old hymn of love and peace; and while the white travelers could not understand a word of the Indian's language, they could and did understand the language of the music with its message of peace and safety.

Music as an Aid to Worship

Music is one of the most effective aids to worship. In fact, public worship is almost impossible without its help.

1. *What Music Does to People.*—The importance of music in the worship service is due to its wonderful power over the thoughts and actions of men.

Every one has observed the tendency of certain kinds of music to encourage people to be noisy and demonstrative. A brass band swings along the street playing a crashing march, and it makes us want to throw our hats into the air and cheer with all our might. A certain soldier who was in France during the World War has in his home a phonograph record of one of the favorite selections that the band played during their long marches. When this soldier is tired from a hard day's work he plays this record. In his words, "It makes me forget my tired feet and body and makes me want to go on and do another day's work."

The hearts of young and old are stirred with the beautiful strains of the "Bridal Chorus" from Lohengrin. Why? Simply because it brings into our minds all the memories that we have of fine and happy married life. The very notes of the music are full of bright promise

for the years ahead. Our hearts increase their beat and our blood flows faster until in our imagination we are marching with the bride and groom and plighting our troth word for word with them.

Every one is familiar with still another type of music. It is the kind of music that soothes and calms troubled hearts. Shakespeare had it in mind when he wrote that oft-quoted line, "Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast." The mother knows its power when she quiets a fretful child by singing softly a beautiful lullaby.

There are two reasons for this wonderful power of music over the thoughts and actions of men.

First, the sound waves that make up the musical notes strike through our ears upon sensitive nerves. High pitches and clashing notes tend to irritate them and make us restless. Notes that are low and soft have the opposite effect and tend to quiet our tired and jumpy nerves. The regular beat of a military march, for example, tends to stimulate the nerve centers that control the action of the heart and by actual test makes it beat faster.

The second reason for the power of music over the lives of men is due to what we sometimes call the "law of association." This simply means that whenever we repeat an experience we tend to remember and repeat other experiences that were associated with the original experience. It is this law that explains the fact that persons who are converted while a hymn is being sung usually count that same hymn as their favorite during the rest of their lives. Every time they hear the

hymn sung or take part in the singing of it the entire conversion experience is lifted up into the center of their consciousness through its association with the hymn, and in a very real sense they live it over again.

Almost every one has had helpful experiences in connection with certain hymns or selections of music. The law of association makes it possible for us to renew these experiences and enrich them with other and even more helpful ones.

The worship service uses this law in helping people to relive the best experiences of other days and in providing the worshiper with new experiences of a rich and helpful nature that in turn may serve to enrich other worship experiences in the future.

2. *Types of Music Suitable for Use in the Worship Service.*—From the foregoing discussion it will be seen that not all types of music are suitable for use in the worship service. In the main, music that tends to suggest the same attitudes and motives that are being developed by the other elements of the service should be selected. A service that is planned primarily for the purpose of creating and developing the attitude of reverence will call for music of a quiet and reverent nature. The attitude of courage will demand music that in itself expresses a positive determination to move forward no matter what obstacles may stand in the way.

Quite frequently, a group may wish to worship informally as a means of thinking through some problem with which it is confronted. In instances of this kind music of a quiet and reverent nature may prove a

positive help as a background of group thinking. Sunday school classes of young people particularly that have the opportunity of meeting in a room apart from the remainder of the school may well afford to try the experiment of pausing in the midst of a discussion for a few moments of worship, with a background of quiet music played by one of their own number or upon a phonograph. Experiments of this kind indicate that such a situation provides an excellent means of bringing the best of our resources both human and divine to bear upon the problems of life.

For this purpose, the music of such hymns as "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty," "Lord, Speak to Me That I May Speak," and "O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee" may be used. If the phonograph is used, such instrumental selections as Handel's "Largo" and "Pastoral Symphony" will be found helpful.

3. *Tests of Good Hymns.*—Not all hymns that harmonize with the theme or central thought of the worship service should be used. There are at least three additional tests that should be used by the leader of worship in selecting hymns.

First, "Can the persons who are to sing this hymn mean what the words say?" A child cannot sing sincerely hymns that carry such expressions as "sinking deep in sin," "deeply stained within," and "there's power in the blood."

Again, the younger members of the group do not have the background of training and experience that would enable them to understand such hymns as "There Is a

Fountain Filled with Blood"; therefore its use in a worship service for them would not be advisable.

On the other hand, there are hymns that all members of the group can understand and indorse with all their hearts. The first stanza of "I Would Be True" is an example. It begins:

> I would be true, for there are those who trust me;
> I would be pure, for there are those who care.

The second test is, "Are the words and music really good, and are they suited to each other?" In the application of this test it will prove helpful if the leader will read the stanzas over several times with such questions as the following in mind: "Is this worth while?" "Will it help those who sing to live better lives?" "Is the music ragtime?"

In the general worship service of the Sunday school, it will be well to remember that the older boys and girls do not like to be called upon to sing "baby" songs. It would not be wise, therefore, to use such songs as "Little Feet, Be Careful" in a worship service for the entire school.

A third test is, "Can the members of the group sing this music without strain?" This means that extremely high or low tones should be avoided.

The wise leader will also avoid those songs in which emphasis is placed upon "part" singing—that is, songs in which various voices alternate in carrying the leading part.

The Leader of Music and the Pianist

The leader of music and the pianist in the small

Sunday school make or break the worship services. Incompetent leadership in either of these positions means poor and ineffective worship services. With consecrated and intelligent leadership here many of the problems of worship in the small school will disappear.

1. *Personal Qualifications.*—Three outstanding personal qualifications are necessary for success in either of these positions.

First, the leader of music and the pianist should be devout Christians. No person can effectively lead others into the experience of Christian worship through music without having first-hand knowledge of the realities of that experience himself. In the small community everybody knows every one else, and the habits of our daily lives rise up on Sunday morning to condemn or commend us. No person should be asked to serve in either of these important positions about whose character there is the slightest question.

Second, the leader of music and the pianist should have a practical working knowledge of worship music. Ability to sing and play is taken for granted, but the emphasis here is placed upon the need for familiarity with the music which is suitable for use in worship services

Unfortunately, the musical education of many young women does not include a study of religious music. Many otherwise competent pianists are utterly ignorant of the hymns of the Church.

As a usual thing the persons who are willing to undertake the leadership of music in the Sunday school have had some training in a certain type of gospel singing.

Too often, however, they too lack a practical knowledge of the great worship hymns of the Church. It is therefore not only difficult, but practically impossible, for them to lead the school into an appreciation and understanding of these hymns. One of the tragedies of the small Sunday school is the failure of its musical leadership to lead the school into the rich experience of singing the worship hymns of the Church.

Next to actual knowledge of these hymns is the willingness to learn to sing them. Certainly, no one should serve in a place of leadership in the small school who is unwilling to learn to sing the truly great worship hymns of the Church. Such a willingness is necessary if we are to have effective worship services in the Sunday school.

Third, the leader of music and the pianist should have the ability and the willingness to work with others without friction. These two persons are in every worship service, and they must be able to work smoothly with the leader of the worship service and the persons that have a part on the program. In addition, their attitude toward the entire school must be so patient and helpful that it will inspire every pupil to do his best toward making the service a success. The worship service is no place for the leader or the pianist to "put on airs" or to show personal preference for one member of the school over another.

No more difficult positions exist in the Sunday school than those of leader of music and pianist. Combining, as they do, the need for technical skill in music and the need for a friendly attitude of coöperation with one's

fellow workers, these positions should command the very best talent available.

On the other hand, these positions offer the opportunity for a service to the country community and Church that is immeasurable. To teach the people of a community to love and sing the great hymns of the ages is a privilege few of us can hope to have. If God has blessed us with musical ability, we should count it a high privilege to share in this holy calling.

2. *Relation of the Leader of Music to the Leader of the Worship Service.*—This relationship should always be that of friendly coöperation. The leader of the worship service is primarily responsible for the *entire* service. He and the leader of music should plan the music of the service together. The experience of the leader of music should prove of great value to the leader of worship as they select the hymns and other musical material for use in the service, but never should the leader of music be given the responsibility of selecting the music for the service without consultation with the leader of worship. To do so is to make it certain that the music will not harmonize with the other elements of the service. No good leader of music will accept such a responsibility.

The leader of music should be on the worship committee and meet with it in its regular monthly meetings. In this way he will have the opportunity of sharing in the making of the general worship plans for the school and thereby be in position to coöperate intelligently with the leaders of worship from Sunday to Sunday.

3. *The Leader of Music and the Worship Service.*—His

part should be just as inconspicuous as possible. The worship service is not the time or the place for the leader of music or any one else to "show off." Anything that the leader of music does that attracts attention to himself detracts from the effectiveness of the worship just that much. To scold the people for not singing, to call their attention to mistakes in the music, to make exaggerated motions of one's arms or baton—in short, to do anything that attracts attention from the worship itself—is to prove one's self an incompetent leader of music in worship services.

The leader of music should lead the school in the singing of the worship hymns in as quiet and dignified a manner as possible. His manner and voice should be positive and certain, but never extremely loud or boisterous. He is a leader because he is presumed to *know* the way the school should go and lead it therein.

Getting the People to Sing

Getting all the people to sing is no easy task. Some people seem to take pleasure in resisting all efforts to enlist them in any group task. They either work alone, or they don't work at all. But the vast majority of people love to sing and will sing if given half a chance. The worship services are so dependent upon good singing that we may well afford to give a large amount of time and effort to solving this problem.

1. *The leader of music will need to observe some "don'ts."* If the problem of getting the people to sing is solved in a constructive way, it is necessary for the leader of

music to refrain from doing certain things that are more or less common in Sunday school worship services.

First, don't scold the school for not singing. Few of us like to have our failures held up for public inspection. People simply do not respond to public scoldings, and wise leaders of music will never resort to this practice.

Second, don't tell people that it is their *duty* to sing. Duty is about the least effective of all good motives. The leader may drive a few people to take part in the singing by appealing to their sense of duty, but down deep in their hearts they will resent it. Their co-operation will not be whole-hearted and, if possible, they will dodge the service at every opportunity. If the leader cannot get people to *want* to sing, there isn't much chance of success in trying to *make* them sing.

Third, don't resort to cheap tricks in order to get the people to sing. The plan of having one group compete with another in order to see which can make more noise may be permissible in "community sings," but it is entirely out of place in a worship service. The singing of one stanza by the men and another by the women is also of doubtful value in the worship service unless the selection is arranged for antiphonal singing.

The practice of employing unusual arrangements of tunes and words and of singing the words of worship hymns to secular tunes is never helpful in creating and developing the spirit of worship. Schemes of this sort may be interesting and entertaining at other times, but their use in worship services tends to attract attention away from the real purpose of the service and center it upon something that is more or less artificial.

Fourth, *don't* try to *teach* the people to sing during a worship service. The worship service is not the place for giving music lessons. The people may need to learn to sing, but arrangements should be made for teaching them outside the worship service.

2. *Is a choir needed to lead the worship service in the Sunday school?* This question cannot be answered with an absolute yes or no. Sometimes a choir is a help, and sometimes it is a very decided hindrance in the worship service.

Hundreds of small Sunday schools discourage the majority of their pupils from taking part in the singing by inviting all the good singers to sit on the platform near the piano and use the dozen or so books that are available. The school comes to regard the choir as singing for the benefit of those who sit out in front and feel no need of singing themselves. Such an arrangement as this makes effective worship by the entire group practically impossible.

Many leaders of music are finding through actual experience that in the small school it is better to encourage every one to remain in his place out in the auditorium instead of inviting "all those who will help in the singing" to come forward and take seats upon the platform or over in one corner. This practice tends to encourage the entire group to sing and to take part in the other phases of the worship service.

3. *How can the school be trained to take part in the singing?* Getting people to sing is largely a matter of teaching them to sing. We like to do the things that we do well. It is the boy who knows how to play base-

ball that is always wanting to get into a game. Teach the members of the Sunday school to sing the hymns that are used in the worship services, and there will be little or no difficulty in getting them to sing whenever it is desired.

This is not so difficult as it may appear. The principal requirement is a leader who is willing to take the time and expend the energy necessary to teach the people to sing suitable worship hymns. The following suggestions will indicate some of the methods that different small Sunday schools have used in their efforts to solve this problem.

First, the entire school remained at the church for an hour after Sunday school practicing the hymns that were to be used in the worship service the following Sunday. This plan was feasible because the church had preaching services only one Sunday out of each month. In fact, this study and practice of hymns could easily be made a regular service of the church on the Sundays when the pastor cannot be present for preaching services.

Second, another small Sunday school conducted a "singing school" in which, instead of the usual songbook employed in these schools, the church hymnal was used.

Third, in hundreds of small schools throughout the Church the teachers of the younger age groups are teaching their pupils to sing some of the hymns that are used in the worship services of the school and church. By singing softly these groups may use these hymns in their own worship during the class sessions.

Workers in the small Sunday school will find the following books valuable in creating and developing an appreciation of worship music:

"Studies of Familiar Hymns," by Louis F. Benson. Price, $2. This book contains a great deal of interesting information about twenty-four familiar hymns with suggestions for study by class groups.

"One Hundred and One Hymn Stories," by Carl F. Price, and "More Hymn Stories" by the same author are also very good. Price 75 cents each.

Still another helpful book is "Hymn Stories," by Elizabeth Colson. This volume contains twelve worship services, each of which is built around a familiar hymn. These services might well be made the basis of an entire year's study of hymns in the Sunday school.

The phonograph has been successfully used by Sunday schools both as a "leader" of hymns in the worship service and as a "teacher" of good music in the various class groups. If a phonograph is available for the use of the school, the worship committee should secure catalogues of records from their nearest music dealer and begin to build up a library of religious hymns and instrumental music.

Another method of stimulating interest in music for the worship services is through the use of "special numbers." In almost every community there are people of splendid musical talent who can render a helpful service in this way. There is need, however, in this connection for extreme caution lest the worship service be used as a place for the display of fancied

ability to sing difficult numbers. No one should ever be asked simply to "sing something" for the worship service. The request should always be for a definite selection which has been carefully selected for its contribution to the worship service.

CHAPTER VI

OTHER MATERIALS OF WORSHIP

The Use of Scripture in Worship

In thinking of worship materials we naturally turn to the Bible. Here we find a rich source of help and inspiration. But in turning to the Bible for worship materials we must take the time and pains to select only those parts of it which are really suited to worship. Certain sections of the Bible describe Hebrew religion and civilization at their lowest and if used in our worship services to-day would give a conception of God that is entirely out of harmony with the New Testament picture of the heavenly Father.

Take the eighty-third and the one hundred and ninth Psalms as illustrations. In them the psalmist prays God to punish his own personal enemies in the most cruel and inhuman manner imaginable. To use such passages as these in worship would destroy the very spirit and purpose of the service and in addition would give the worshipers an unchristian conception of prayer and its place in the Christian life.

The Scripture passages in a worship service may serve either of two purposes.

First, they may be used merely to form a point of contact with the worshiper. We have been accustomed to using Scripture in devotional services for so long that the mere mention of a passage tends to turn the thoughts of the worshiper toward God. For this purpose we have

what are known as "Calls to Worship"; short and usually familiar passages of Scripture which are used at the very beginning of the worship period to call the attention of the worshipers to the spirit and purpose of the service. A familiar illustration of this use of Scripture is the passage from Habakkuk (2: 20):

> The Lord is in his holy temple;
> Let all the earth keep silence before him.

Second, the Scripture lesson may provide material for interpreting the theme of the service. When used for this purpose the Scripture passage is usually several verses in length. Its content may vary from a story to a discussion of some life problem. In every case it should be easily understood by the group. Insincerity in the religious life may be definitely encouraged by the use of Scripture materials that have little or no meaning for the worshipers.

It is not necessary to have a formal Scripture reading in every worship service. Quite frequently the use of a short passage as a "Call to Worship" is all that is needed. Never drag a Scripture lesson into the worship service simply because it has been the custom to "read the Bible" in all Church services. If a Scripture passage serves the purpose of the service better than any other materials available, use it. Otherwise, use something else.

1. *Methods of Reading Scripture in Worship Services.*— The usual method of reading Scripture in worship services is that of leader and people taking turn about.

Another method is that of unison reading. That is, leader and people read all the verses together.

The habit of reading all Scripture responsively should be discouraged. In fact, it should never be done except when the group is familiar with the passage and the passage itself is so divided into verses as to make responsive reading easy to understand. The twenty-fourth Psalm is an excellent illustration of the Scripture that lends itself to reading responsively. It was written for use in the worship services of the temple and was read or sung responsively. Note how naturally and easily the second verse follows as a response to the first.

Leader: "The earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein."

Response: "For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods."

The third verse contains two questions which are answered by the response in the fourth verse:

Leader: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place?"

Response: "He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."

The wise leader of worship will always read the Scripture lesson over very carefully and decide ahead of time just what method of reading will add most to its effectiveness. Quite often the reading of the Scripture lesson by an individual proves more effective than either a responsive or unison reading. Again, the simple telling of the Scripture story in one's own words may prove very effective, especially when familiar passages are used.

2. *Selecting Scripture for the Different Age Groups.*—The leader of worship in the one-room Sunday school is constantly faced with the problem of selecting Scripture that is worshipful in spirit and at the same time within the range of the understanding of the younger pupils. The practice of using the Uniform Lesson selection of Scripture is not always a good one. This passage is almost always selected for adults. Again, it is not always appropriate to the theme of the worship service.

In a school where all age groups must worship together the leader of worship should always keep the needs of the younger boys and girls in mind and as far as possible select Scripture passages that are within the range of their understanding. One good reason for doing this is the fact that the adults will also be more likely to understand it. The most important reason is, of course, that of helping the boys and girls to so understand and love the Bible that its truth may prove a blessing to them and to others.

This means that the stories of the Bible will prove our richest source of Scriptural materials—stories in which living men and women, boys and girls have a part. From creation in the early chapters of Genesis through the record of the struggles and triumphs of the early Christians in the New Testament the Bible is full of potentially useful stories.

Story Material in Worship

Everybody likes a good story. How often we forget the text and the main points in the minister's sermon, but remember his illustrations! A well-told story de-

scribes ideals or great truths so concretely that we can see them walking around as living men and women, boys and girls. What does it mean to be brave? Or loyal? How would you tell another person how to be brave? How would you help him to be loyal to some great cause? The most natural and effective way is to tell a story of some person who acted bravely in time of great danger, or who in the face of great difficulties proved himself a loyal friend.

1. *Selecting Stories for Use in Worship.*—Too many persons think that just any kind of story will do in a worship service. While it is true that no hard and fast rules can be laid down for deciding whether or not a story is suitable for use in a given worship service, certain very definite principles will help the leader of worship in selecting the best.

(1) The worship story must have *real meaning* for the worshipers. That is, the story itself must do something more than just entertain the group. It must help the worshipers understand more clearly and feel more keenly the spirit and purpose of the particular worship service in which it is used.

It is for this reason that "jokes" and stories that hold up individuals and groups of persons to be laughed at should never be used in the worship service.

This principle of selecting stories that have real meaning for the worshipers also means that the story must be in terms of events and experiences that are reasonably familiar to the worshiper. Descriptions of strange and unfamiliar experiences in worship stories

direct the attention away from the real meaning of the story and thereby destroy much of its worship value.

In this connection, it should be pointed out that it is unwise and unnecessary to "add a moral application" to worship stories. To do so is as much a confession of failure in telling the story as to add an explanation to a joke.

(2) The worship story must be *brief and full of action.* The stories of Jesus are fine examples. Take the story of the rich man in Luke 12: 16-20, for example:

"And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be?"

(3) The worship story must *tell only one story.* That is, it must have what is sometimes called *unity.* The inexperienced story-teller tends to include unnecessary details and incidents. Study the story of the rich man quoted above. Every word contributes to the meaning of the story.

2. *Helps for the Story-Teller.*—The best way to learn to tell stories is *to tell them.* Read the story over a number of times in order to fix the main events firmly in mind and then tell it in your own words. Never try to

memorize the exact words of the author unless it is an especially meaningful sentence here and there.

Give careful attention to the beginning and the end of the story. Seek to begin in such a way as to capture the attention of all with the first sentence. Hold back the climax of the story until near the end. Stop talking when the end of the story is reached. It is better to stop a minute too soon than to add one unnecessary word.

"Where can I find good stories?" The answer is, "Everywhere"—in books, magazines, newspapers, in the lives of one's friends, in our own daily experiences. The principles discussed above will help in selecting the kind of story that is suitable for use in worship.

The following books will provide the teacher and worship leader with an abundance of story materials. Every school, no matter how small, should buy one or two of these books every year.

(1) Books that will help one to learn to tell stories more effectively:[1]

"Stories and Story Telling," by Edward Porter St. John.

"How to Tell Stories to Children," by Sarah Cone Bryant.

(2) Books of stories:

"Knights of Service," by Emerson O. Bradshaw. Contains 22 Bible stories and 19 character stories. Very good.

[1] Prices and directions for securing these books will be found in the Appendix.

"Story Worship Programs for the Church School Year," by Jay S. Stowell.

"More Story Worship Programs," by Jay S. Stowell.

"Why the Chimes Rang," by Raymond Alden.

"Story Worship Material," National Girls' Work Board, Toronto, Canada.

Making "Talks" in the Worship Service

Not every kind of talk is helpful in worship. For example, a talk about flowers might be very interesting and helpful in a general way; but unless it helps the worshiper to feel the presence of the God who made the flowers, it is not worshipful.

So, the talk in the worship service should always contribute to the development of the worship experience. The effective talk is close akin to the story and will make liberal use of story material. This is especially true for groups in which there are younger boys and girls.

For older boys and girls and adults, the talk may take the form of a brief discussion of some concrete and definite problem of daily life. This problem should be in harmony with the general theme of the worship service, and the talk should not only point out ways of solving the problem, but should strive to develop the desire on the part of the worshipers to coöperate with God in working out the solution.

Worship services in the small Sunday school are usually limited to fifteen minutes. The talk should never take more than one-half of this time, and in most instances five minutes will be enough.

With careful preparation an excellent talk can be made in five minutes or less, on almost any theme that lends itself to worship purposes. And the worship service is not the place for making impromptu remarks. If a talk is worth making, it is worth the time and the work necessary to prepare it in the best possible manner.

By preparing the talk ahead of time we mean that the speaker will first of all study his topic thoroughly. He will then carefully organize in a definite and orderly manner what he wants to say. He may, or may not, write it out. This will depend upon the person preparing the talk. The best public speakers find it very helpful to write out what they are going to say. And most of them feel that the briefer the talk the more necessary it is to plan its content carefully.

Worship talks should be positive and constructive in nature. The worship service is not the place for describing the shortcomings of persons or institutions. No matter what the difficulties may be, let the speaker strive to suggest practical and definite solutions for the problems confronting the group. And as has already been pointed out, the great majority of people need to have their desires to face the problems of life as Christians strengthened. The worship talk should strengthen these desires and thereby help each worshiper to dedicate himself anew to the task of building a better world.

A common mistake in the making of worship talks is the practice of "talking down" to the worshipers. Of course, one should select language that is easily understood by all, but it is never wise to call attention to this fact. A visiting preacher remarked at the beginning of

his sermon: "I had two sermons in mind this morning; one very simple, the other rather elaborate. At first, I was in doubt about which one I should preach, but after considerable thought I decided that the simpler one would be more appropriate." It is needless to state that his congregation resented the implication that they could not understand the more learned sermon.

It is not necessary to have a talk in every worship service. Rarely, if ever, will a talk and a story of any considerable length be used in the same service.

The Use of Pictures in Worship

Pictures, like stories, make vivid and real the highest ideals and greatest truths of life. Who has not felt the call to worship God surge into his heart as he looked upon the bowed heads and the reverent attitude of the farmer lad and his wife in that famous painting, "The Angelus," by Millet? In the distant background is the village church, and from its steeple the bells are ringing out the call to evening prayer.

In our home there hangs an inexpensive copy of Hofmann's "Jesus in Gethsemane." No words can portray the vivid reality of that tragic scene. Forsaken by all, even the twelve disciples, the Master suffers and prays alone. How grateful we should be to the artist for helping us to understand more clearly the love that moved the Son of Man to make so great a sacrifice.

These illustrations serve to point out the influence of good pictures in the lives of men. God works through men in the painting of beautiful pictures, and we should

not hesitate to use their handiwork in making our churches more effective as places of worship.

1. *Suggestions for Using Pictures in the Worship Services of the One-Room Sunday School.*

(1) Secure in advance small and inexpensive copies of a picture that is to be used in a worship service. Give a copy of this picture to each teacher with the request that on the Sunday preceding the date of using the picture in the school worship service the teacher spend a few minutes showing the picture to her class and explaining its meaning.

In the worship service a larger copy of the picture may be again shown to the entire group or simply pinned on the wall where all can see it. No direct reference need be made to it in the worship service. The very fact of its presence will recall the experience of the previous Sunday and help the pupils to enter into the spirit of the service which the picture represents.

(2) More and more the small Sunday school is finding the solution of many of its problems in a brief fellowship period at the opening of the Sunday school hour. As has been suggested, it provides the opportunity for teaching new hymns, making announcements, and preparing the school for the worship period which is to follow.

Occasionally, this period may be used for the study of a picture or some other piece of art. Suppose that a worship service is being planned around the theme "Helping Others." What would be more helpful than to show the entire school a copy of the picture "How a a Shepherd Boy Helped a King" and spend a few

minutes talking about the artist who painted it, how it came to be painted, and its message for us? Or, suppose that the worship service is on some theme connected with the old, old story of the birth of Jesus—what would be more appropriate than a brief study of some such picture as Mueller's "Holy Night," or Lerolle's "Arrival of the Shepherds"?

(3) No matter how small the school, it can always have a few copies of beautiful religious pictures upon the walls. In a school that brings all groups together for the worship service, it will be best to have pictures that appeal to *both* younger and older pupils. Pictures suitable for this use are: "Madonna and Child," by Max; "Holy Night," by Mueller; "Jesus in Gethsemane," by Hofmann; "Jesus and the Fisherman," by Zimmerman; "Head of Christ," by Hofmann; "Christ Blessing Little Children," by Plockhorst; "Arrival of the Shepherds," by Lerolle.

Two or three carefully selected pictures, appropriately framed and hung where all can see them, are better than a large number carelessly selected and hung at random about the church.

It is not wise to keep the same picture on the wall until it becomes worn and dusty. It is better to change pictures quite frequently so that Christmas pictures, for example, may be brought before the pupils at the appropriate season.

2. *Where to Get Good Pictures for Use in Worship.*—Fortunately, copies and reprints of many of the famous religious paintings of the world can be secured at very

low cost. The following publishers are reliable and will take pleasure in sending catalogues of pictures:

Perry Picture Company, Malden, Mass. This company specializes in pictures of all sizes and in prices ranging from one cent to two dollars.

Taber-Prang Art Company, Springfield, Mass. This company carries the least expensive of the larger reproductions in artotypes and carbons. Sizes suitable for placing on the wall of the worship room may be had at prices ranging from twenty cents to four dollars.

Lamar & Whitmore, 810 Broadway, Nashville, Tenn., carry a fairly good-sized stock of low-priced but excellent quality pictures that are especially useful in connection with the Group Graded and Closely Graded Lessons.

The following books will help teachers and leaders of worship to use pictures more effectively in the class session and in the worship service:[2]

"How to Show Pictures to Children," by Estelle May Hurll.

"Pictures Every Child Should Know," by Mrs. Mary Schell Bacon.

"Famous Bible Pictures and Stories They Tell," by Elizabeth Bonsall.

Dramatization in Worship

There is an increasing use of plays, pageants, and other forms of dramatic expression in the Church to-day. While no Sunday school should undertake elaborate

[2] Prices and directions for securing these books will be found in the Appendix.

performances without the leadership of some person who is thoroughly trained in religious dramatization, there is no reason why even the smallest school should not enrich its worship services with simple pageants and tableaux. Especially at Christmas and Easter time the school will find an abundance of material suitable for use by persons who have little or no training in dramatic art.

The following publications will help persons interested in this form of worship material secure both source material and practical help in its use:[3]

"Use of Drama in Religious Education," a pamphlet issued by the Religious Education Association.

"Pageants for Special Days in the Church Year," by Mary M. Russell.

"Dramatization of Bible Stories," by E. E. Miller.

Nature Materials in Worship

Many leaders of worship find materials in the great world of out-of-doors. The country church is especially fortunate at this point. In the springtime, there is an abundance of dogwood and wild flowers for the gathering. In autumn, the goldenrod, leaves of innumerable tints and colors, ripened pumpkins and stalks of corn provide the leader of worship with a great variety of material with which the church on Sunday morning may be transformed into a beautiful reminder of God's loving care.

The collecting of appropriate nature materials and

[3] Prices and directions for securing this material will be found in the Appendix.

the decorating of the church for worship services will provide class groups with many opportunities to share in wholesome enterprises. Not only will these groups render a service to the entire school by providing beautiful settings for the worship service of the school, but the contacts with nature in the gathering of the material will provide the class itself with abundant opportunities for worship.

Not only should the Sunday school think of bringing some of the beauties of nature into the worship service at the church, but the country Sunday school especially has the opportunity of planning a few of its worship services through the year for use in some attractive out-of-door location. On a hilltop at sunrise or sunset, in a shady glen, by a lake or in the presence of a newly harvested field of grain—any place that provides an opportunity for assembling the school, or sections of it, for worship.

For suggestions in planning outdoor services of worship, secure "Services for the Open," by L. I. Mattoon and H. D. Bragdon.

The Offering and the Worship Service

Experience in a number of small schools seems to indicate that the offering can and should be a definite part of the worship service. The purpose of the offering will determine the appropriate place for it. If it is simply the offering which is taken regularly every Sunday for the running expenses of the school, then it should come early in the service. This type of offering may well be thought of as an expression of thanks for

God's blessings in daily life and in that way help the worshiper to realize more keenly the presence of God.

Occasionally, the worship service will center around an offering for some special cause. In this case, the program should be planned so that the offering comes near the close of the service and in this way provide the worshipers with an opportunity of rendering Christian service through a gift of money.

In either case, the offering should be treated as a definite part of the worship experience. Soft instrumental music may be played while it is being taken. Those who are responsible for passing the plates should be in their places and carry out their part with as little confusion as possible. The plates should be brought to the altar quietly and reverently. In services where the offering is made the climax, a prayer of dedication, and dismissal to the work of the classes should follow immediately. Otherwise, the ushers should resume their seats or quietly withdraw to the rear of the room.

No effort has been made in this chapter to describe all materials that may be used in the worship service. Rich resources in poetry and prose not mentioned in these pages will suggest themselves to the alert leader of worship. Local stories of heroic pioneers of the Church will add their contribution. Experiences of present-day home and community life will provide abundant opportunity for making the worship experience a part of daily life.

No church and Sunday school need be without an abundance of rich worship materials. But there is one

thing that should always be remembered. Whatever material is used—prayers, music, stories, pictures, nature, poetry, offerings—it is a means to an end; not an end in itself. And that end is helping men and women, boys and girls into a more perfect worship experience with God the Father.

CHAPTER VII

PLANNING PROGRAMS FOR WORSHIP SERVICES

NEXT to finding and selecting the right kind of materials for use in worship services the actual planning of the service is the most difficult task. In fact, the two problems—of selecting material and of organizing it for successful use in the service—are so closely related that they cannot be separated in actual practice. An understanding of the use of worship materials in an organized service of worship always helps in the discovery and selection of these materials. On the other hand, knowledge of the sources and principles governing the use of the materials of worship is necessary before anyone can plan an effective worship service.

This chapter discusses some of the principles underlying the planning of worship services, while the chapter which immediately follows undertakes to offer more detailed help in organizing the school for preparing and carrying out these services.

DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC WORSHIP SERVICE SHOULD KEEP STEP WITH DEVELOPMENT OF WORSHIP EXPERIENCE

It will be recalled from the discussion in the first chapter of "What Happens When We Worship?" that there are five distinct steps in the development of the individual's worship experience. It is very important

that these steps be kept in mind and followed in planning the public worship service. These five steps are:

1. A desire to worship. This desire may express itself in a feeling of need to worship in order to find a way out of some problem or difficulty. Whatever the source of this desire, it is necessary to the most effective worship. In planning worship services, we therefore seek to begin the service in such a way as to encourage people to *want* to worship.

2. Realization by the worshiper that he is in the presence of God. The program for the public worship service takes this important step in the individual's experience into account and undertakes to intensify this feeling by the use of such hymns or other worship materials as tend to make him realize the presence of God.

3. A feeling of humility and unworthiness.

4. Facing the facts of life as they are. The public worship service should seek to help the worshiper face the problems of his daily life fairly and squarely. It is at this point in the worship service that stories and talks are found to be most effective.

5. Dedication of the worshiper to the task of solving the problems and righting the wrongs of life. In harmony with this climax in the experience of the worshiper the public worship service should close with the leader's prayer or a hymn of consecration committing the group to definite efforts of service in God's kingdom.

Materials of Worship Are Means of Helping People to Worship, Not an End in Themselves

The hymns, the prayers, the Scripture readings, the talks, and all other materials which may be used in the service should be used, not for their own sake, but for the contribution which they have to make toward more effective worship.

An effective method of applying this principle is to put it into the form of a question: "Will this piece of material which is about to be selected for use in the worship service help the persons who attend the service to worship in the best possible way?" This same principle will also apply to persons taking part in the service. Each person taking part in the service should be selected for his ability to sing, tell a story, read a passage of Scripture, or lead a prayer in such a way as to help people worship more effectively.

The application of this principle will quite often reveal the fact that it is not always the best "trained" person, or the person with most experience in public programs, who is most effective in worship services. Wise leaders of worship will not depend altogether upon the persons who are in the habit of taking part in the service *every* Sunday, but will seek to enlist one or two "new" persons in each service.

Worship Service Should Be Planned Around Central Theme

The theme of a worship service provides the leader and his helpers with a central point around which to

organize the various materials used in the service. It is as necessary to the effective planning of a worship service as a text is to the minister in the building of his sermon.

The selection of a central theme and its constant presence before the leader of worship will help him to avoid the mistake of trying to crowd too many good things into one service. We must learn to choose not only between the good and the bad, but also between the good and the best.

Still another reason for planning the worship service around a definite theme is the fact that most people can think effectively of only one thing at a time. One definite and concrete suggestion will carry more weight in helping people to worship than a half dozen indefinite and poorly presented ideas.

The selection of the themes for the worship services in a school where all groups meet together should be in the hands of a committee. This committee should select the theme and make the general plan for each service at least one month in advance. Wherever possible, these plans should be made for an entire quarter in advance.

In the school without a worship committee the superintendent and the person selected by him to lead the worship service will select a theme and work out the details of the service.

In the selection of themes for worship services two principles stand out above everything else.

First, worship services should begin *where people are* and not where we would like for them to be.

This means that the themes for worship services

should deal with problems which the school and the community are facing. In applying this principle, one school in a country community where the athletic program of the consolidated high school was the center of interest during the fall and winter months planned a series of worship services dealing with problems of fair play and Christian sportsmanship. Another school during the time when a political campaign was in progress planned its worship services around such themes as "Loyalty to High Ideals" and "How Can Boys and Girls Who Are Not Old Enough to Vote Best Serve Their Community?"

The problems of various groups may also be used as themes for worship services for the entire school. A worship service built around some such theme as "Learning to Know Our Father's World" is not only interesting and helpful for the younger children, but for older people as well. The older boys and girls and the young people in the Sunday school are interested in a multitude of problems and thrilling life situations. The wise superintendent will seek to use these problems just as often as possible and give to the persons most keenly interested an opportunity to share in building and carrying out the programs on these themes.

Second, leaders of worship may profitably use the seasonal interest of people as the central theme around which to build the service.

The interests which naturally arise in the lives of people at such special seasons as Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas may serve as very helpful themes for a number of worship services. These themes should always

be in keeping with the spirit and purpose of these sacred seasons, and no effort should be made to provide programs of "entertainment" on these occasions.

Another point to remember is that themes connected with any special season are far more effective as worship material if used *before* the climax of the season is reached. That is, worship programs connected with the Thanksgiving season should be used *before* and *not after* Thanksgiving Day. The same would be true of Christmas or any other special season. People lose interest very rapidly in a special day or season the moment the climax of that season is reached. It is very difficult to revive that interest until we begin to approach this season in a new year.

Variety in Worship Services

While talking with a young man about attending the worship services of the school, a Sunday school superintendent asked the direct question: "Why do you and your friends always wait outside the church until the class period begins?" The young man replied with an equally direct answer. He said: "The opening service is the same old thing over and over every Sunday until everybody knows exactly what is going to happen before the service ever begins."

The best kind of worship service would become dull and uninteresting if repeated on a dozen successive Sundays. Sunday schools everywhere are suffering from a disease that might well be called "sameitis." Some of the symptoms of this disease are: Singing the *same* songs Sunday after Sunday, calling on the *same*

person to lead the prayer time after time, opening the Sunday school in exactly the *same* way every Sunday, doing everything in the *same* way to-day that it was done yesterday and last year. The outcome of this terrible disease is spiritual death for the individual members of the school and for the school as a whole.

There are many ways in which the resourceful leader of worship can give variety to programs of worship and at the same time maintain the spirit and dignity of real worship. Outstanding among these methods, of course, is the use of a different theme each Sunday. The general outline of the worship service will be the same, but a different point of interest will serve to make it real and vital in the lives of the worshipers.

Another method of giving wholesome variety to the worship service is in the presentation of the materials of worship. A hymn that we have learned to know only through its use by the congregation may prove very effective as a solo or a duet. The music of some familiar hymn, such as "Sweet Hour of Prayer," can be used effectively as a background for silent prayer and meditation. The music is played softly by the pianist while the group sits with bowed heads and follows the suggestions of the leader in silent prayer.

It will be recalled from the discussion in Chapter VI that even the Scriptures may be read in a number of ways that are helpful. The writer recalls a worship service at Christmas time when the familiar story of the birth of Jesus was narrated in the speaker's own words rather than in the exact language of the Bible. The

speaker told the story simply and reverently and the effect was wonderful.

Back of all successful effort to secure variety in worship services must be the sincere desire on the part of the leader to make the service truly worshipful. For the most effective of all variety in worship is the ever-changing variety of life. If the worship service is really and truly alive, it will not lack wholesome variety.

CHAPTER VIII

ORGANIZING FOR WORSHIP

LET us visualize an opening service in a Sunday school where little or no effort has been made to prepare for it.

Place: A one-room church where all age groups meet together for the worship service.

Time: Twelve minutes past ten o'clock on a Sunday morning in June.

Superintendent: (Who has been waiting patiently for some one to come who can play the piano.) "Let everybody who will help in the singing please come to the front. Mrs. Smith, will you please play for us?"

Mrs. Smith: "Let Mrs. Jones play. I am afraid that I can't play the songs you would want to sing."

Superintendent: "Come on, Mrs. Smith, and play; we will sing nothing but old songs this morning." (Mrs. Smith finally takes her seat at the piano.)

Superintendent: "What shall we sing? Somebody make a selection."

Susie Jones: "Number 97."

Jimmie Smith: "Number 126."

Superintendent: "I believe that No. 97 was announced first, so we will sing it and then sing No. 126. Not many of us here this morning, so let everybody sing."

Mrs. Smith: "I can't play No. 97.'"

Superintendent: "What about No. 126? Can you play it?"

Mrs. Smith: (Turning pages of songbook.) "I can't play it either."

Superintendent: "Well, select something that you can play."

Mrs. Smith: "I can play 'Shall We Gather at the River?'"

Superintendent: "All right. Let's sing it. What number is it? No. 208. Everybody turn to No. 208 and sing."

After singing "Shall We Gather at the River?" the superintendent called for another selection, and after considerable delay a song was found that Mrs. Smith could play. At the close of this song, the pastor was called on to lead a prayer. Following the prayer another song was sung, and the superintendent instructed "the classes to take their places and the teachers to take charge."

Altogether, this opening service used nearly twenty minutes of the Sunday school hour. Counting the twelve minutes lost because the school did not open promptly at ten o'clock and the time required for the pupils to go to their classes, a total of thirty-five minutes —more than one-half of the Sunday school hour—was used before the class work actually started.

But time was not the only thing lost in this opening service. Along with at least fifteen minutes of precious time, every officer and teacher and pupil of this Sunday school lost, as far as that particular Sunday school hour was concerned, the opportunity of worshiping God in a real and helpful way. Furthermore, the work of the teachers in their classes was made more difficult because of the failure of the worship service to make proper preparation for the class period which was to follow.

Why was this opening service (it can hardly be called a worship service) a failure? Was it due to lack of ability on the part of the superintendent and his helpers in planning and carrying out a worth-while worship service? Not at all. The superintendent, the officers and teachers, and a number of pupils in that school were as

capable of planning and leading an effective worship service as almost any group of workers anywhere.

What was the trouble? Simply this: the superintendent and his fellow workers did not think that worship in the Sunday school was of sufficient importance for them to go to the trouble of organizing their forces for effective worship.

Worship services do not just happen. Somebody must plan for them in advance. In the Sunday school, the need for a well-planned and helpful worship service every Sunday makes it necessary for the superintendent and his fellow workers to organize their forces for this important task. Otherwise, the school will find itself trying to worship each Sunday morning with little or no preparation having been made for the service.

Responsibility for Worship Services in the Small Sunday School

In the school where all age groups must worship together the chief responsibility for the worship of the school as a whole rests upon the general superintendent. Not that he will assume the responsibility of leading all the services; this is not necessary nor desirable, but upon his shoulders rests the responsibility of seeing that the worship services are properly planned for and carried out.

The wise superintendent will not undertake the planning of the worship services of his school without the help of the Workers' Council. This help can be rendered most effectively through a Worship Committee, with the superintendent as the ex-officio chairman.

The Committee on Worship should not be large. In schools where all age groups worship together it should be composed of the superintendent, the pastor, one representative from each of the three principal age-group divisions or classes, and in most instances the leader of music. The selection of a representative from the various age-groups helps to insure that the needs of these groups will be taken into account in planning the services.

The representative from the Elementary group should be one of the teachers. In the Adolescent and Adult groups the selection should come from the entire group and need not necessarily be a teacher.

A practical method of selecting the members of this committee, other than the pastor and superintendent, who are members by virtue of their office, is for the various age groups to make nominations to the Workers' Council.[1] In the case of the representative from the Elementary group the nomination should, of course, be made by the teachers of Elementary classes. In the Adolescent and Adult groups the nomination should come from the entire group. That is, the selection in either of these two older groups should be made by the group and reported to the Workers' Council for confirmation. Since the official staff of the school is well represented on this committee by the pastor, the superintendent, and the representative from the Elementary group, the representatives from the Adolescent and

[1] In schools where the Sunday School Committee is functioning the Worship Committee should be confirmed by it.

Adult groups should, in practically all instances, be one of the pupils.

Work of the Worship Committee

While the work of this committee is of the utmost importance, it is not complicated with a large number of details. The committee should direct its attention, first of all, to the following items:

First, general plans for improving the worship services of the school. Permanent results in any enterprise are attained only through carefully laid plans over a long period of time. The Worship Committee should think of its work in terms of months and years rather than in terms of this week and next Sunday. It is only through this looking into the future and planning for months in advance that the Worship Committee can make the best possible use of special seasons of the year, such as Christmas and Easter. One of the oft-repeated tragedies of Sunday school work is the failure to allow sufficient time for adequate preparation. We wait until the last minute to begin our preparation for a worship service and then wonder why it fails.

The Worship Committee should not only plan in advance for the worship services which center around the Christmas and Easter seasons, but for every service throughout the year. The committee may well afford to give serious consideration to such questions as: "What are we trying to accomplish through the worship services of the Sunday school during the coming year?" "What materials will be needed from Sunday to Sunday in planning the kind of service that will contribute to our

goal for the year?" "What can the committee do to train the people in an understanding and appreciation of worship so that they will take a more intelligent part in the services than heretofore?" "How can the committee help the leaders of worship from Sunday to Sunday prepare for the leadership of their services?"

In answering such questions as these the committee will probably find it necessary to begin the accumulation of a school library of worship materials. Books and magazines, hymns and instrumental music, worship stories, and material for talks are needed in worship services, and the Worship Committee can render no more important service than that of starting a collection of the best material available in these various fields.[2]

The committee will probably find from a study of the situation in their own school that study courses in worship are badly needed. A part of their task, therefore, will be that of helping the school to arrange for these courses.

The second main line of work for the Worship Committee will be that of selecting the leaders for the Sunday morning worship services. Suggestions for the guidance of the committee in selecting these leaders are discussed in a later section of this chapter. One source of supply that the committee should not overlook in selecting these leaders is the committee itself. While the members of the committee should not appear as leaders of services so often as to attract unfavorable attention, yet they should carry a fair and reasonable part of this responsi-

[2] Practical suggestions for starting a school library of worship materials are given in the Appendix.

bility. All leaders of worship services should be selected at least one month in advance; and if at all possible, they should be selected three months in advance. No one should be announced as a leader unless his consent has been secured in advance.

A third angle of the Worship Committee's work is that of helping the leaders of worship prepare for their particular service. A practical means of rendering this help is for the committee to have a monthly meeting with the leaders for the next month and carefully plan the general outline of each service.

This meeting will serve the threefold purpose of helping each leader to plan his service in harmony with the general theme for the month, give the committee the opportunity of suggesting the best materials for use in each service, and insure each service against the mistake of too frequent use of any one person.

The coöperation of officers and teachers is necessary for effective worship. Public worship is a coöperative enterprise. The success of worship in the one-room school is dependent especially upon the willingness of the officers and teachers and pupils to coöperate with the worship committee and the leader of worship as they make their plans for the service. This coöperation consists in actually taking part in the leadership of some part in the service whenever called upon and in active participation as a sincere and devout worshiper in *all* parts of the service.

Selecting Leaders for the Worship Service

It has been suggested that the responsibility for the

selection of the leaders of worship services in the Sunday school should rest upon the worship committee. Since the superintendent of the Sunday school is the ex-officio chairman of the committee, this responsibility of selecting leaders will fall back upon him in all cases where the Worship Committee does not function.

What kind of persons should be selected as leaders of worship? All the qualities of successful leadership in any other worthy enterprise could be set up as desirable for the leader of worship, but in the multiplicity of details we sometimes lose sight of the things that are most important. Consequently, emphasis is placed here upon only the qualities of personal character that seem absolutely necessary to the successful leadership of worship services.

First, the successful leader of worship must be sincerely religious. Real worship is intensely religious; therefore its leadership must be upon the same high level.

Nothing can take the place of this quality in leaders of worship. A person may be brilliant and well trained as a public speaker or leader of music, but unless he is sincerely religious all his brilliance and training are worth nothing in a worship service.

Effective leadership in worship not only means that the leader knows how, but that he knows *where* to lead. It is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for anyone to lead others successfully where he has never been himself. Familiarity with the worship experience is, therefore, a second definite quality of successful leadership in worship. Note that this statement does not require experience in the actual leadership of worship. *It is*

experience in worship that is essential. This experience may be gained, of course, in private or as a worshiper in the public service.

Experience in the actual leadership of worship services is valuable, of course, but not essential to success. Many persons have held back from accepting a place as a leader of worship simply because they felt that their lack of experience *as a leader* would be an insurmountable handicap. The Worship Committee can do much to overcome this feeling on the part of sincerely religious persons by quietly helping them to make adequate preparation for the service which they are to lead.

A third quality of successful leadership in worship is the ability to lead a service without attracting undue attention to one's self. The great majority of people have this ability, but quite frequently they lack the *willingness* to exercise it. (See Chapter X for suggestions in overcoming this difficulty.)

Building the Program for the Worship Service

The actual building of the program for a worship service is not a difficult task. A fair understanding of the principles that are involved and access to a limited amount of worship materials will make it possible for any group of Sunday school workers to plan and lead effective worship services.

The following summary of the main principles underlying the building of programs for worship services will serve as a guide for workers who desire to lead their schools in more effective worship:

1. Plan the worship service so that its parts are in

harmony with the development of the experience of worship in the individual.

2. Think of the program of the worship service as a *means* for helping people to worship and not as an end in itself.

3. Plan each worship service around a central theme. That is, each worship service should deal with some specific problem or need of the people who are to be in the service rather than with general propositions that mean little to a local group.

4. Select all materials used in the service in harmony with the central theme. Never "lug" in a song or a talk because some one happens to be present who can sing a solo or make an impromptu talk.

5. Secure variety in the service through wholesome contrasts rather than through the use of sensational methods. It is always wise to avoid the use of the same type of material in successive numbers in the worship service. For example, a number that calls for the congregation to stand and engage heartily in the singing of a hymn should be followed by a talk, a story, or quiet meditation while the entire group remains seated.

6. Organize for the building of programs for the worship services just as the school organizes for every other worthy enterprise.

And it might be added that it is very important for the school to begin at once. Delay is fatal. The school that waits for a convenient time to begin the planning and building of better programs for worship services will never have them. A poor beginning is better than no beginning. Let a school begin with the

resources that are at hand; it will soon discover that others develop as the need grows.

Even a superintendent or a teacher with all the other officers and teachers indifferent to the need of better worship services can make a good beginning by planning the worship services which he has the opportunity of leading so well that the others will sit up and take notice. With God's help a sincere and earnest Sunday school worker can do anything that needs doing. The need is there—in thousands of Sunday schools—and God is ever present and ready to help. The question, then, for each Sunday school worker to face is, "Am I willing to do my part?"

CHAPTER IX

PREPARING THE WAY FOR BETTER WORSHIP SERVICES

No man thinks of reaping a harvest of cotton or corn until he has prepared the ground for the planting of the seed. Sometimes this preliminary preparation takes more time and is of greater importance than the entire cultivation of the growing crop. The mere preparation of programs for worship services is not enough. The school must go behind these programs and *prepare the way for them.*

Worship services frequently fail at this very point. We expect the service because it is held in the "name of the Lord" to be a success no matter what conditions exist in the way of an uncomfortable church or lack of training on the part of those who share in the service. But God never does anything for us that we can do for ourselves. He does not build fires in our churches on cold mornings or mend broken windowpanes. His children can do those things for themselves and are made better by the doing.

The tragedy of our failure to do the things that God has intrusted to our hands lies in the fact that our neglect tends to close our lives to the approach of his Spirit. We cannot worship God effectively in a service where we have failed to make every possible preparation for the service

Preparing the House of God for Better Worship Services

Foremost among the things that the Sunday school needs to consider in its efforts for better worship services is the *proper preparation of the house of God.* The idea that we can worship God anywhere and under any circumstances may be true in theory, but it does not work out very well in practice. Cold and unattractive buildings tend to drive people away from God rather than inspire them to worship and love him.

1. *The church building should be worshipful in appearance, both inside and outside.* Some church buildings are so unattractive in appearance or so suggestive of things other than the work of the Church that the desire to worship God is driven from the minds of those who approach their doors. Add to an unattractive exterior an interior of soiled wall paper, broken window-panes, and unswept floors, and you have a combination that would seriously hinder the best prepared worship service in the world.

A building does not need to be expensive in order to be attractive. Some of the most expensive church buildings are least suggestive of the worship of God. But it should have the *appearance of a church.* Too many church buildings are in appearance more like a residence, a schoolhouse, or some other public building than they are like a church.

A plain, one-room church may be made to reveal its true character as a place of worship by the simple means of straight roof lines and doors and windows of proper

shape and location. The addition of a modest spire properly proportioned adds to the worship effect. As has been suggested in Chapter VI, the use of art glass in the windows provides a constant and beautiful reminder of the fact that the church is a place set aside from the other buildings in the community for the purpose of worship.

In addition to having a church building that suggests a place of worship by its very appearance, it is also important that this building shall be *kept in good repair.* A leak in the roof not only damages the building, but actually makes it more difficult for people to worship by reminding them of stained wall paper and other things that are not conducive to the practice of the presence of God. A broken windowpane may greatly hinder the worship of God by making it impossible for the janitor to heat the church building comfortably on days when the weather is cold. Broken steps before the church door are not only dangerous, but every time a man stumbles over a loose board it is just that much more difficult to lead him into a worshipful attitude of mind and heart.

2. *The church building should be clean and comfortable.* In fact, *it must be clean and comfortable* if the people are to use it as a place where God is worshiped in spirit and in truth. Cleanliness is not only next to godliness, but as long as soap and water are easily available it is necessary to effective godliness.

Comfort in a church building depends upon several things. Since the worshipers are seated during most of the service, comfortable seats are of the greatest im-

portance. Straight pews of the proper height securely fastened to the floor provide the most satisfactory form of seating equipment for the vast majority of churches. They are suggestive of the worship function of the church auditorium and are more durable than chairs.

Since the children are expected to share in the worship service of the small school, comfortable seats should be provided for them. These seats should be of such height and size as will enable the children to touch the floor with their feet and at the same time rest their bodies against the backs.

Proper heat and ventilation are of equal importance with comfortable seats. Thousands of churches fail to provide adequate facilities for heating the entire building. A thirty-six-inch box stove, no matter where it is located, simply will not heat a room forty by sixty feet comfortably on a cold, windy day.

The best way to handle this situation in the one-room church is to secure a stove with a large sheet-iron jacket around the fire box similar to the type used in rural school buildings. This type of stove can be placed in an out-of-the-way corner of the room and, if a fire is started an hour or two before the service, will heat the entire room comfortably and evenly. Local hardware merchants will gladly provide information about the size and cost of this type of heating equipment.

People should never face a bright light while in a worship service. It distracts their attention and may actually injure their eyes. If there are windows in the wall of the church toward which the worshipers must

face, shades of a color that harmonizes with the wall paper should be placed over them.

Preparing the Members of the School for Better Worship Services

In addition to preparing the church building for the worship service, the people themselves must be prepared for participation in it. We get the most out of any experience when we are "ready" for it. By being "ready" we mean that the persons who are entering into the worship service should not only really desire to worship, but they should be reasonably familiar with the materials which are to be used in the service.

The training of people in the worship experience so that they will really *want to share in a worship* service whenever the opportunity affords is a long and slow process. The best training *for* worship is, of course, training *in* worship. Every time a person takes part in a helpful and wholesome worship service, the more certain he is to want to repeat the experience.

Pastors and Sunday school teachers have a great deal to do with the more or less indirect preparation of the people for participation in the worship services of the Sunday school and church. The worship experience is so effective in helping men and women meet the questions and problems of life in a Christian way that they are easily led into the habit of daily worship. Daily worship is in turn the best kind of preparation for taking part in the worship services at the church on Sunday.

Another way of preparing people for participation in the worship service is through the study of worship

materials. Everybody knows that we enter into the singing of a hymn with more zeal and enthusiasm if we are familiar with its words and music. The same thing is true of all the other materials used in the service.

It is important, therefore, that every school, no matter how small, shall earnestly and persistently go about the task of teaching its members a reasonable amount of worship material. This will include the memorizing of a few unison prayers, Scripture responses for use in connection with "calls to worship," and a reasonable number of hymns.

The superintendent and the worship committee should plan ahead so that the class groups may have some opportunity of learning hymns, prayers, and other worship materials before the time set for their use in a worship service. A few moments at the beginning of the class session and an occasional meeting of the group for practice will accomplish wonders in preparing the school to take an active and intelligent part in the service.

Many schools have found it helpful to give the first ten minutes of the Sunday school hour to a fellowship period in which the entire school may prepare for the worship service to follow. This is an excellent time for practicing songs, the reading of Scripture passages, and the learning of other worship materials.

Perhaps the best time of all for teaching worship materials to the members of smaller schools is at the eleven o'clock hour on Sundays when there is no preaching service. Again, a special meeting once or twice a month will provide an opportunity for the school to come together for the purpose of learning new hymns

and at the same time have wholesome fellowship and recreation.

An occasional evening could be given to the study of a Scripture passage suitable for use in a worship service as a responsive reading. Take the twenty-fourth Psalm for an example. With some one to describe the original use of this Psalm in the temple services, some one else to explain the meaning of various verses and the entire group to spend some time in reading it aloud, an entire evening could be profitably given to a study of it alone. The practice in reading along with the clearer understanding of the meaning and proper use of this passage would greatly improve its effectiveness in future worship services.

Many of the great hymns of the Church have beautiful and helpful stories connected with their writing and use. These stories, along with a study of the meaning of the words of the hymn and the practice of its music, will help any school to prepare for more effective worship services. A previous chapter (Chapter VI) suggests a number of books and other materials for the use of the superintendent and the worship committee in teaching the school to love and appreciate the truly great hymns of the Church.

Reception of Members of School and Visitors as They Enter Should Be Suggestive of Worship

It has been pointed out that the appearance of the church building and its surroundings have a great deal to do with the effectiveness of the worship services

which we seek to carry on in the church. Still another important influence upon the worshipers is the *manner in which they are received on their arrival at the church.* Going to church is very much like visiting the house of a dear friend: the *manner of reception* by our friend has much to do with our enjoyment of the visit.

A successful school-teacher of many years' experience once said to a group of young teachers: "The first day of school is the most important of all the days in the school year. And of the first day, the early minutes when the boys and girls are gathering in their classrooms and meeting the teacher for the first time are by far the most important of all the minutes in the day. During these early minutes the pupils receive their first impressions of the teacher and her work, and these impressions tend to influence everything else that happens during the day."

The same thing is true in the Sunday school. The reception of the members of the school on their arrival at the church exerts a tremendous influence upon their attitudes toward the worship service and the class session to follow. *It is much better for the teacher to meet the pupils as they arrive than for the pupils to meet the teacher as she arrives.* This simple practice emphasizes the value and importance of the work of the Sunday school far more effectively than any number of sermons or lectures.

Give Everybody a Cordial Welcome

The practice of providing two or three ushers who stand at the door and not only welcome everybody with

a smile and a cheery "Good morning," but direct all to their proper places, is a good one. Visitors and new pupils are thereby assured of a friendly reception, and the regular pupils are reminded afresh every Sunday that the Sunday school is a place of dignity and order.

In the small school the best plan is for every class to have certain pews to which its members go immediately upon their arrival at the church. The teacher should be present at the place designated for her class and receive each pupil with a pleasant word and smile. In all classes, except those in which the pupils are too young to read, the teacher should have a sufficient number of hymn books for distribution to her pupils.

With the younger classes the teacher may spend the time leading up to the beginning of the worship service in quiet conversation about the helpful activities in which they have engaged during the week. Older classes should spend this preliminary period in reading and study or quiet discussion of class activities.

What Should Be Done with Late Comers?

A class of eighteen Sunday school workers in a training school once described this problem as their greatest difficulty. And it *is* a hard problem! The instructor of the class referred to above had an opportunity to check the time of arrival at Sunday school of the members of the class. Only three of the eighteen were on time. The example of the leader was reflected in the habits of the pupils.

In a word, the best way to deal with tardy pupils is to get them to Sunday school on time. And the best way

to get pupils to Sunday school on time is for *every officer and teacher to be in his or her place at least ten minutes ahead of time.*

Once the worship service has begun, as few interruptions as possible should be allowed. If the church building has a vestibule, the ushers should ask the late comers to remain there until a suitable time for their admission presents itself.

No one should be admitted during prayer, the reading of the Scripture, or while a speaker is making a talk or telling a story. About the only time when a late comer may be admitted without attracting attention from the worship service is during the singing of a hymn when the entire group is standing.

In churches without vestibules the ushers should seat late comers in the rear with just as little disturbance as possible.

In addition to dealing with pupils who are tardy, the Sunday school in the village and open country quite frequently faces another problem quite as difficult. This is the problem of dealing with the men and boys who remain outside the church until about the time for the classes to assemble for their work.

Experience in many schools indicates that this problem, like all others, yields to quiet and persistent efforts on the part of a few leaders to teach a better way of doing things. Argument and abuse hinder rather than help.

Improving the worship services will help to make every one *want* to be present from the very beginning. Enlistment for a definite part in the service of those

who are in the habit of lingering a few minutes on the outside will oftentimes prove a solution of the problem.

Above all, do not become discouraged. Habits of long standing are not changed in a day or a week. But they *can be changed*. Anything that *needs* to be done for the upbuilding of the church and the community *can* be done by loyal and earnest workers who steadfastly set their minds and hearts to its accomplishment.

CHAPTER X

LEADING THE WORSHIP SERVICE

On the top of Mount Mitchell, in the mountains of North Carolina, is buried the body of a man who lost his life in the scientific exploration of its rugged slopes. Many times Dr. Mitchell had climbed this mountain in company with a trusted guide, but on the occasion of his last visit, the guide failing to meet him at the appointed place, he set out alone. Several days later a searching party found his body in a deep ravine where he had evidently fallen after having lost his way.

The leader of the worship service is a guide for his fellow worshipers. Without his help they are likely to wander here and there; singing a few songs, reading a Scripture lesson or two, and calling upon somebody to lead a prayer, but not really worshiping.

The Leader's Preparation

The best preparation for leadership in worship is *acutal experience in worship*. We know most about those things which we have actually experienced in our own lives. We are therefore most effective in helping others into a definite experience of worship when we have recently entered into and shared that experience in our own hearts.

The leader of worship may seek this preparation of himself both in private and in the public service. A few moments of quiet meditation and prayer in which one earnestly seeks to open his heart and life to the presence of God's Spirit is always helpful. The theme of the service which one is to lead, or the Scripture lesson to

be used, may well serve as the basis of this meditation. More than one leader of worship has found a quiet visit alone to the church auditorium very helpful in creating and developing a worshipful attitude in his own heart. There, in the quiet of God's house, it is easy to turn one's thoughts toward him who is at the very heart of the service that we plan in his name.

The public service offers an opportunity for the prospective leader of worship to share in the worship experience. In addition, it gives a splendid opportunity for observing the leadership of another and perhaps more experienced person as he conducts the service.

The wise leader of worship will also seek to prepare himself in a general way for more effective leadership. That is, he will be on the lookout for books, magazine articles, and other materials that will help him to understand better the experience and practice of worship. In addition, he will be constantly looking for better worship materials. A story, a song, or some other bit of material may suggest the idea that will provide the basis of a worship service sometime in the future. These suggestions and ideas should, of course, be jotted down in a convenient notebook for future reference.

Specific Preparation by the Leader.—The general preparation of the leader of worship, referred to above, is a slow process that goes on day by day and year by year in the lives of all earnest Sunday school workers who desire to make themselves more useful in building the kingdom of God. For the immediate task of leading a worship service next Sunday morning there is certain specific preparation that should be made.

1. Carefully select all hymns, Scripture passages, stories, prayers, and other materials to be used in the service. In selecting these materials confer with the chairman of the Worship Committee or, where there is no committee, with the superintendent of the school. It will also be wise to consult with the leader of music and the pianist in order that there may be no confusion or misunderstanding about the music to be used.

2. Assign parts to those who are to assist in the leadership of the service. It is very important that these assignments be given out at least one week ahead of the time for the service. The leader should also take a few moments to tell each person who is to help in the service something of the general nature of the worship program. That is, each participant should not only know what is expected of him, but something of the contributions being made by others. This will help each one to fit himself and his part into the spirit of the entire service and prevent duplications.

In making assignments to his helpers, the leader should tell each one exactly how much time will be available for his part in the service. A worship service in the small Sunday school is usually limited to fifteen minutes, and it is very easy for one person to destroy its effectiveness by taking more than his share of the time. Of course it is only the persons who are making talks, telling stories, or leading the prayer who will need reminding at this point. The leader can easily estimate the time necessary for each hymn, Scripture passage, and other materials that are fixed in length.

3. Be sure that the room is comfortably heated and

well ventilated. Of course, the school should have a janitor to look after such items as this, but it is well for the leader to see that he has not failed in his duty.

4. Arrange songbooks and other worship materials so that they may be used with the least possible confusion. The method of distributing songbooks is very important. Where the pupils sit in class groups with their teachers, it is perhaps best to place on the pew near the teacher a sufficient quantity of books to supply the class and instruct her to supply the pupils just as the service begins.

In schools where no effort is made to group the pupils by classes it is better to take a moment before the beginning of the service for the distribution of songbooks. If the ushers have been instructed ahead of time to have everything in readiness, this will take no more than a minute or two.

5. Call those who are to assist in the leadership of the service together for a few minutes before the service begins for final directions and a brief word of prayer. Be sure that each person understands just what is expected of him. In the one-room church this meeting will necessarily be held in the presence of the pupils who have arrived early, and for that reason should be brief and as quiet as possible. The prayer may well be a silent petition for guidance in the service offered while the members of the group bow their heads.

Leading the Service

The leader has more to do with the success or failure of the worship service than any other person connected

with it. His every word—indeed, his every act—adds to or detracts from the effectiveness of the service. Who has not observed the effect of the minister's every act in the pulpit as he leads the waiting congregation in the morning service of worship? If he whispers with a fellow minister about the size of the congregation or calls the chairman of the Board of Stewards to the platform for a hurried conference, or does any one of a hundred other little things that indicate his lack of actual participation in the service, the congregation is sure to follow his example and fall far short of taking the part in the service that effective worship demands.

On the other hand, the leader, by the quiet and dignified manner in which he plays his part, may encourage the congregation to share with him in every part of the worship service and thereby lead them into the very presence of God.

Every leader of worship can well afford to make the following prayer his own as he walks into the church on the morning that he is to lead the worship service of the Sunday school:

> O thou, whosoever thou art
> That enterest this house,
> Be silent, be thoughtful, be reverent,
> For this is the house of God;
> And leave it not without a prayer to God
> For thyself, for those who minister,
> And for those who worship here. Amen.

The feeling of reverence that fills his own heart cannot but have its influence upon the words that fall from his lips and in turn upon those who await his leadership.

While no hard and fast rules can be laid down for guidance in the actual leadership of the service, the following suggestions may prove of some help:

1. *The leader should begin the service exactly on time.* Nothing detracts from the effectiveness of the worship service quite so much as failure to begin promptly at the minute set for the opening of the service.

In the first place, it is a confession of failure not to have everything in readiness. And since the leader must bear a large share of the blame for this failure, his leadership of the service suffers as a result.

In the second place, failure to begin promptly makes it impossible to give each part of the worship service the time that was originally planned for it. This throws everything out of order and seriously affects the spirit of the service.

Still another reason for beginning on time is the fact that it encourages the entire school in the practice of the Christian habit of promptness. Pupils are quick to respond to the actual situation in which they find themselves, and the school that makes a practice of beginning its worship services promptly has little trouble with tardiness.

2. *The leader should be reverent in every word and act.* It is not enough for the leader to refrain from saying and doing those things that will attract attention from the spirit and purpose of the service; he should be positively and sincerely reverent in all that he does. People quickly detect any lack of sincerity on the part of the leader and respond to his every mood.

Some people feel that there is no need for the leader

and his helpers to practice their parts. This is a mistaken idea. The person who is to read the Scripture lesson, for example, should read the passage over aloud a number of times. He should practice reading slowly and distinctly in a tone of voice that is reverent but not affected.

Even the person who is to lead in prayer should take the time to organize and think through the main thoughts in his prayer. In fact, the person who has had little or no experience leading public prayer may find it very helpful to write out a prayer in full and memorize it. At any rate, we should remember that God leads and blesses us just as surely in the preparation of a public prayer as in any other thing that we might do for him and in his name.

The brief preliminary meeting of the leader and his helpers referred to earlier in the chapter is one of the best possible ways of insuring a reverent attitude on the part of those who lead the service. A moment of silent prayer helps wonderfully in bringing about the realization that we are in the presence of God.

3. *The leader should keep the service moving steadily.* Delay for any reason is usually fatal to the effectiveness of the service. As soon as one number is finished the next one should begin immediately.

This suggestion does not mean that somebody must be saying something every minute of the service. Quite the contrary is true. A period of silence now and then in the worship service may be very helpful. Silent prayer is especially meaningful. But there is a vast difference between a period of silence in which the

worshipers are asked *to do something* (meditate, pray, read a hymn or Scripture passage) and an interval in which there is silence because the leader does not know what to do next.

4. *The leader should make as few announcements as possible.* Announcements that are not connected with the worship program should be made before the service begins. However, the worship service itself will require certain explanations and announcements in order that everybody may participate intelligently. The wise leader will make them in as few words as possible and in a quiet tone of voice that does not attract attention to himself and, therefore, away from the spirit of the service.

Quite frequently it will be possible to find some one in the community who owns some type of duplicating machine such as a mimeograph. In this case, copies of the main outline of the service can be provided for all and thereby do away with the necessity of explanations and announcements.

5. *The leader should guard against talking too much himself.* The temptation to "add a few words" is especially strong with the person who has had a great deal of experience in public meetings. And the inexperienced leader may fall into the habit of introducing each person with some complimentary remark, such as: "We are highly complimented this morning in having the honor of listening to a solo by Mrs. Blank." To realize how unnecessary these remarks are in connection with a worship service, one has but to think of intro-

ducing the person who is to lead the prayer in a similar fashion.

Of course, the leader should feel free to speak when there is need for it. As a general rule, any remarks that he may have, other than directions concerning the service, will best come near the close of the service. And even then, they should be an actual part of the service and not something "tacked on" to an otherwise complete program.

6. *The leader should quit when through.* In a well-planned worship service a prayer or hymn of dedication follows immediately after the "talk" or story. This prayer or hymn marks the climax of the service, and no effort should be made to add anything after it is over. The school should learn to go to its class work immediately.

It is better to stop a minute short of the time set for the close of the service than to run a minute over time. Teachers and pupils alike will appreciate the prompt closing of the worship service so that they may begin their class work in a regular and systematic manner.

At the heart of all these suggestions about the leading of worship services is the spirit and attitude of the leader toward the whole matter of worship. Nothing is more important in the leadership of successful worship services than first-hand knowledge of the joy, the pain, and the satisfaction that comes in Christian worship. No leader will think of these suggestions as anything more than guideposts along the road. The vital reality of the worship experience is found, and can be found only, by sharing in it—not by reading *about* it.

CHAPTER XI

GROUP WORSHIP IN THE SMALL SUNDAY SCHOOL

THE worship service in which all the pupils meet together at the opening of the Sunday school hour does not provide fully for all worship needs. At best, this general worship service provides very little opportunity for the Beginners, the Primaries, and the Juniors to sing the songs, take part in the prayers, and hear the stories and talks that are suited to their needs. It is almost always a service *for* and *by* adults.

Even in those schools that try to give the children a real part in the opening worship service there is danger that their contribution will be regarded by the adults as a sort of entertainment feature. If the Beginners, for example, are asked to sing one of their songs and everybody claps when they are through, these children tend to become self-conscious and to think of the worship service as a period of entertainment rather than a time for getting better acquainted with the heavenly Father.

In addition to the worship service at the beginning of the Sunday school hour the small school should encourage each teacher to plan for brief moments of worship during the class period.

"That is impossible in a one-room church," exclaimed a teacher of Beginner-Primary children when this suggestion was made in a meeting of the Workers'

Council. "It would disturb the other classes for my children to start singing."

This good teacher had seemingly never realized that it is possible to have real worship without the singing of a song; or that the singing, if it is done softly, will disturb the other classes no more than the ordinary conversation of the teacher and pupils.

While the remaining pages of this chapter are given over to suggestions for helping teachers in one-room schools provide additional worship opportunities for the pupils in their classes, we must not forget that every Church that possibly can do so is under obligation to provide the opportunity for each age group to worship apart from the others. This does not mean that a separate room must be provided for the Beginners, another for the Primaries, still another for the Juniors, and so on up to the Adults—combinations can and should be made in small schools. For example, in the school with a limited number of pupils it is best to combine Beginners with Primaries, and the Intermediates with Seniors and Young People.

In rebuilding or remodeling their church building Sunday schools that are now meeting in one-room buildings should plan to add at least three rooms to the auditorium. This arrangement will provide the physical plant for the following effective plan of organizing the worship, study, and other activities of the school:

One room in which the Beginner-Primaries (ages 4-8) will have their own worship and class sessions.

One room in which the Juniors (ages 9-12) will have their worship and class activities.

One room in which the entire group of older boys and girls (ages 13-18 or 20) will have not only their worship services and class work, but which will be used as a place for week-time social meetings and recreational activities.

The church auditorium in which the adult class or classes will meet for worship and study.

While waiting for the time when it will be possible for them to rebuild their church, and thereby provide the rooms necessary for departmental worship, many schools are finding it possible to increase greatly the effectiveness of their present worship services by finding a place for at least one group in a near-by residence. In the event that a place can be found outside the church for only one group, it seems best to provide first for the younger pupils (Beginner-Primaries).

Among the many books that are available for leaders of worship in schools where each age group has its own worship service the following have been found the most helpful:[1]

For workers with Beginners (4- and 5-year-old children): "The Worship of the Little Child," by Edna Dean Baker.

For workers with Primaries (6-, 7-, and 8-year-old children): "Worship Training for Primary Children," by Clara Beers Blashfield.

For workers with Juniors (9-, 10-, and 11-year-old children): "Training Juniors in Worship," by Mary Alice Jones.

[1] Prices and directions for securing these books will be found in the Appendix.

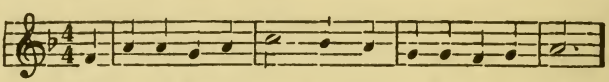
For workers with Young People: "Training Young People in Worship," by Shaver and Stock.

Suggestions for Helping Teachers Make Use of Opportunities for Worship During the Class Sessions

Certain fundamental principles must be kept in mind by all teachers who would succeed in helping their pupils make the experience of worship a vital part of the class session

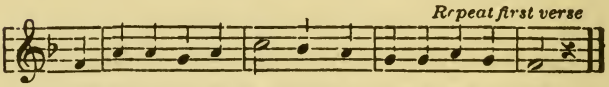
First, *the materials of worship—prayer, music, Scripture, stories, pictures—are also the materials of teaching in the regular class session.* Practically all teachers use stories, pictures, and Scripture passages at one time or another in their teaching. It is the *way in which this material is used* that determines its value in helping the pupils to worship during the class period.

A simple illustration will make this principle plain. A teacher of a Beginner-Primary class in a one-room church was using the picture of a little boy pouring water into his toy watering can so that he could give the thirsty flowers a drink, as the basis of a lesson on "Helping Others." In answer to her questions, the children pointed out that the little boy was not only helping his mother by watering the flowers, but he was helping the heavenly Father as well. The children eagerly suggested other ways of helping the heavenly Father, and in the closing moments of the class period the teacher suggested that they bow their heads and sing softly:



1. My heav'nly Father wants me To help Him ev-'ry day,
2. I wa-ter thirst- y flow - ers, I feed His bird-ies, too,

Repeat first verse



And so I try to help Him In all my work and play,
And what my mother tells me I try my best to do.[2]

No one was disturbed by the quiet singing of this song, and it helped these children to enter into an experience of fellowship with God that is the most helpful sort of worship. As a result, God will be more real to them in the daily tasks about the home.

One other illustration. A class of young people were discussing the question, "Should a Christian young man or woman follow the 'crowd' in selecting his or her amusements?" The group was pretty evenly divided, and the teacher was about to dismiss them without arriving at any definite conclusion in the matter when one quiet fellow suggested: "Since we are trying to be followers of Jesus, suppose we ask *his* guidance before we go."

A moment of silent prayer followed, and the teacher quietly pronounced the benediction. As the class moved toward the door, one of the young men who had argued for "following the crowd" said to his companion: "I had never thought of it before, but

[2] Words and music by Elizabeth Jenkins. Used by permission of the Methodist Book Concern.

Jesus *didn't follow* the crowd. And by his help *I will not follow it either.*"

The experience of this young man suggests another principle that every teacher should keep in mind. *Worship is in itself a practical means of solving the difficulties and problems of life.* In that brief moment of worship he had come face to face with Jesus Christ. In helping him decide what was right, it was worth more than all the argument that had gone before.

The use of worship as a means of solving the problems of life is especially helpful with young people and adults. In class discussions, there is a temptation to win our point in the argument, no matter what the truth may be: so it is quite often helpful for the teacher to call for a few moments of silent meditation before the class is dismissed. In fact, the spirit of fellowship in the group should be so developed that *any* member of the class will feel perfectly free to call at any time for a word of prayer or a period of silent meditation in which all will undertake to open their hearts and lives to the leadership of God.

The third principle to keep in mind is more in the nature of a friendly warning. *Do not try to force the worship experience into the class session.* Nothing kills the spirit of worship quite so quickly and effectively as trying to compel people to pray. The teacher should not feel for a moment that there should be a season of worship in *every* class session. In all probability, there will be many sessions during the year when the teacher and the pupils will feel no particular need for worship in the class group. The practice of *always* beginning or

closing the class session with prayer is not to be commended for this very reason. It becomes a mere formality that soon loses its meaning.

Teachers of children under twelve years of age are especially fortunate in the abundance of worship materials supplied through the teacher's magazines of their denomination.[3] This material is interwoven with suggestions for teaching the lesson and making the entire program of the elementary classes and department interesting and helpful.

The smallest school can use this material to good advantage. As an illustration of the practical suggestions that are given for the teacher's guidance in making worship a vital part of teaching, the following material for use during the class session is taken from the lesson on "God's Care for Birds and Beasts."

FOR USE BY THE TEACHER DURING THE CLASS SESSION

1. **Beginning the Lesson.** How does God care for the birds and animals? Can you help God take care of some of his small creatures? What kind of homes do birds have? Are they all alike? How do some of the animals get ready for winter? How many different kinds of homes of birds and animals have you seen? God helps everybody to know how to make a home. It seems that every one likes his own home best. It is the nicest place to be, isn't it? Would you like to hear a story about homes of different animals?

2. **The Story.** (*This story or one of the teacher's own may be used.*)

[3] Workers in Sunday schools of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, will find the *Elementary Teacher* especially helpful.

One day a little fish was darting about in the sparkling water.

"O, haven't I the nicest home in all the world?" he cried. "The water is so fresh and clear. No one has a home as lovely as mine!"

"What an idea!" laughed a small bird who sat on the limb of a tree just above the brook. "My home is much nicer than yours. I was born and raised in a nest, swaying, swaying at the very top of a tall tree. And you, poor little fish, can only swim. You can never fly up into the blue sky. Look! Don't you wish you could do this?" And the bird spread its wings and soared up toward the heavens and back again.

A rabbit who lived in a burrow beneath the ground at the foot of the tree laughed quietly to himself.

"You do not know what a snug home I have down here," he said. "Cold water and wabbly tree tops indeed! Give me my safe little cave all warm and cozy!"

"I live by the edge of the brook!" croaked a green frog close at hand. "It's so nice here in the tall wet grasses. And when the cold winds begin to blow I just jump in the brook and bury myself in the mud at the bottom. I never feel the chill there while I sleep soundly all winter."

"I don't like the idea of sleeping so long at all," declared a brightly colored bird who had just joined the group. "I fly south in the winter. Now, my little friend here stays with you all the year," and he turned to the bird who had spoken first. "I should not like such a cold home in winter."

"O, it's not bad," replied the first little bird cheerfully. "The pine trees give me shelter, and children often scatter crumbs for me. I rather like it—much better than I should the long trip across the ocean which you take."

"None of these plans would suit me," spoke up a sheep who was eating grass in the meadow. "I should not like to live in the air or the water or under the ground, or fly south, or eat crumbs. The thing to do is to stay in the pasture all day and have a kind master who puts you in the sheepfold

at night or when the weather is very bad and who feeds you hay when the grass is gone."

"All right, except that you should have said 'puts you in the stable,'" neighed a horse.

"No, 'gives you bones and lets you sleep on the back porch,'" barked a dog.

"The great forest is the only place to live," growled a fierce voice, and a gray wolf stood looking at them all. "The best thing is to find some rocky cave in a hillside with trees all around and never bother with masters to shut one up or feed one."

And just then the smallest bird, soaring up into the sky, broke into song.

"God is good!" sang the little bird. "God gives to every living thing the home that suits it best!"[4]

3. **After the Story.** Our Father cares for all things he has made and helps them to live. Would you like to thank him for his care? Prayer: Our Father, we thank Thee for Thy care of us. We thank Thee for the birds and animals. Help us to remember to help Thee take care of them. Amen.

Young People and the Worship Services of the Small School

Suggestions have been made for encouraging the teacher of the Young People's class to provide brief periods of worship during the regular class sessions. We want to go further now and suggest that in the school where all age groups worship together the Young People's class should be given the opportunity to prepare and lead at least one-fourth of the worship services of the school as a whole.

The main reason for this suggestion is the fact that

[4] Helen Dean White, in the *Elementary Teacher*. Used by permission.

we learn best through having a part in the thing to be learned. After all, our task in the Sunday school is not so much that of providing worship services *for others* as it is that of leading others to worship for themselves. This is especially true of our relationship with young people. Real worship must be purposeful; it cannot be an experience into which we merely drift. The surest way, therefore, to teach young people to worship is to provide them with the opportunity and guide them in building and leading programs of worship.

This opportunity must be something more than an announcement that the Young People's class will have charge of the worship service one Sunday in each month. A good brother who was a steward in an open-country church objected to the appointment of two young men on the Board of Stewards on the ground that "you could not depend upon young people for anything." A few questions brought out the fact that two or three years before a young man had been elected steward in that Church and had given up in despair when he discovered that the older stewards had assigned him to the task of collecting the pastor's salary from all the old "tightwads" in the community who were never known to contribute to any worthy cause.

The wise Sunday school superintendent and pastor will plan to enlist the help of their young people rather gradually and in such a manner as to give them abundant opportunity for "trying out" their own resources. A good way to begin is to start a discussion in the Young People's class about the worship services and

methods of improving them. This discussion should result in one or two members of the class being placed upon the school worship committee.

At first, the contribution of the young people to the service will probably be nothing more than taking some specific part, such as a Scripture reading, special music, or story under the direction of an adult leader. But as various members of the group gain experience, the opportunities for leadership should be increased until the Young People's group is responsible for at least one-fourth of the regular worship services.

In some schools the young people will assume responsibility for one service each month. In other schools the practice of planning a series of services around some great theme, such as "Loyalty" or "Brotherly Love," will provide the young people with an opportunity to build a series of programs in a constructive way.

Suggestive List of Songs for Use with Each Age Group

This list of songs, while not presuming to be complete, is submitted for the guidance of Sunday school workers who sincerely desire that boys and girls in their school shall have the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the songs that best express their worship needs.

Beginners and Primaries

"Thank You, Father."
"This Is God's House."
"Can a Little Child Like Me?"

"We Give Thee But Thine Own."
"This Is My Father's World."
"I Think When I Read That Sweet Story."
"Jesus, Friend of Little Children."
"Be Ye Kind."
"Friends."
"God's Children Live in Many Lands."

Juniors

"I Would Be True."
"For the Beauty of the Earth."
"Dare to Be Brave, Dare to Be True."
"Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty."
"Silent Night, Holy Night."
"God of Our Boyhood."
"Onward, Christian Soldiers."
"Tell Me the Stories of Jesus."
"Dear Lord and Father of Mankind."
"We Plow the Fields and Scatter."
"America the Beautiful."

Intermediates, Seniors, and Young People

"O Jesus, I have Promised."
"O Master Workman of the Race."
"O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee."
"Dear Lord and Father of Mankind."
"God Send Us Men."
"I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord."
"Take My Life and Let It Be."
"In Christ There Is No East or West."
"Lead On, O King Eternal."
"America the Beautiful."
"Love Divine, All Loves Excelling."
"Lord, Speak to Me, That I may Speak."
"Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life."
"Rise Up, O Men of God."
"For the Beauty of the Earth."

CHAPTER XII

WORSHIP AND EVERYDAY LIVING

Two men were walking one Sunday morning by a field of growing corn. "John," said one, "did you ever stop to think that a stalk of corn grows just as much on Sunday as it does on any other day in the week?"

"No," replied John. "What if it does? Why shouldn't Sunday be just as good a day for growing corn as Saturday or Monday?"

"To be sure," answered William, who had started the conversation; "that is just the point. I was just thinking that Monday and Tuesday and the other work days in the week are just as good days for being religious as Sunday."

In answer to this rather startling statement John said nothing for several minutes. Finally, he burst out: "Bill, you are right; religion isn't worth much unless it is strong enough to reach from the church out into the fields and homes of the folks."

The practical purpose of religion is to help men see themselves as God sees them and help them reconstruct their lives along the lines that he would have them live. But men do not live their lives alone. They are in constant contact with the members of their families, their neighbors, and through the modern means of travel and communication, even with the people of other lands and nations. The religious life cannot be lived alone. Neither can it be lived just on the Sabbath day and at

the church. Nevertheless, the Church is important and must not be neglected. So is the Sabbath day. But the business of being religious—Christianly religious, at any rate—is a matter of everyday concern. Every thought, word, and act in our entire lives has religious meaning. The man who would be a Christian on Sunday must take into account the fact that he must also be a Christian on the other six days of the week.

It is this vital connection of religion with daily life that makes worship so important. As long as men thought of religion as a sort of "Sunday-go-to-meeting" affair only, it did not make much difference to them whether they were on speaking terms with God or not. In fact, the worship service at the church was usually nothing more than a program in which the preacher did most of the talking in an effort to please God and keep him in a good humor with his people.

After all, the purpose of worship is to help men come into such close fellowship with God that they can see what is wrong with their lives and gain the strength to correct these wrongs in the light of God's purpose for them. The experience, therefore, becomes a sort of power house for Christian living.

And that is exactly the purpose for which Jesus used the worship experience. His public ministry was begun with a period of forty days and nights of fasting and prayer. Again and again during the three years of his public career he would draw his disciples aside to some quiet place or retire alone to some secluded spot for a few hours of worship. The night before he went to his death on the cross was spent in prayer.

Private Worship

The most desirable result of all our programs and training of people in worship is that the habit of devotion will "carry over" into the affairs of daily life. In fact, the supreme test of the public worship service may well be placed at this point. If it creates a strong desire for one to seek the companionship of God in the privacy of some quiet place at home or abroad, it has been a real success.

We are describing private worship in terms of companionship with God because so many people need to realize afresh that fellowship with God is a simple friendly act rather than a theological argument. A passage in the Old Testament tells us that "Enoch walked with God." That simply means that Enoch and God were on such friendly terms that their relationship could best be described in terms of going on long walks together. And as a little girl explained it: "One day they walked so far that God said: 'Enoch, we are nearer my house than yours; you go on home with me.' And Enoch did."

A thoughtful Sunday school teacher who was having his first experience with a group of boys asked this question: "What should a person try to do during the time set aside for his private worship?" An older and more experienced teacher replied that she made a practice of taking the lesson for next Sunday as the basis of her private worship on at least one day during the week.

Not only was the suggestion of this teacher a good

one, but we could well use it as a basis of making closer connection between the regular worship services on Sunday morning and the private devotions of the people throughout the week. For example, the suggestion by the leader of the worship service that a hymn, a story, or some other part of the worship service be used during the week as the basis of private worship would doubtless help many to establish the experience of worship as a regular feature of their daily life.

Another helpful practice is that of carrying a copy of the New Testament in one's pocket and using a brief passage from it as the basis of private worship. Some have found the calling to mind of the stanzas of a hymn very helpful. It would be well, in this event, to study the meaning of the hymn in the light of such questions as these: "Just what does this hymn mean to me?" "What should it mean to all men everywhere?" "How may I make its real meaning plain to my neighbors?"

Occasionally, one should approach the time set for his private devotions with the sole purpose of listening to the voice of God. The majority of us talk too much, anyhow. God needs an occasional opportunity to "woo his way into our hearts."

Worship in the Home

One of the earliest memories that I have of my father's home is connected with the visit of the "circuit rider" and his efforts to convince my father that he ought to "hold family prayers morning and evening" every day. Father refused to undertake the task because, as he said,

"it was too big a job for anybody who wasn't a preacher."

And right here is the center of the difficulty with many deeply religious parents who have the training of their children very much at heart and who would gladly undertake any reasonable task for their good; they think that family worship is such a difficult enterprise that nobody short of a minister has the time or the training for it.

Effective family worship is not a difficult or boresome task to be undertaken only because of a sense of duty to one's children and to God. It is a privilege through which the members of the family—father, mother, and children—may share in Christian fellowship with one another and with God.

There is a home that I sometimes visit. In it are three big, strapping boys, the father, and the mother. The father plays the piano a little; he is the only musician of any kind in the family. One of the "after supper" habits of this family is to gather around the piano and, with the father playing, sing two or three hymns. Sometimes they have a prayer; more frequently, they do not. But the spirit of sincere fellowship and devotion is there, and while the boys of this family take part in the various school and community activities no one of them has given any sign of even wanting to stand anywhere except on the right side of every issue.

1. *Teaching Children to Pray.*—Many parents teach their children to *say a prayer.* That familiar prayer of childhood is an example:

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep;

If I should die before I wake,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to take.

But too many parents stop here. In fact, because of the overemphasis upon death, it is never wise to teach children the prayer quoted above. If it is taught children at all, some form such as the following should be used:

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray Thee, Lord, my soul to keep;
Thy love be with me through the night
And keep me safe till morning light.

As the child's interests widen, the following adaptation of the same prayer is preferable:

Now I lay me down to sleep.
Heavenly Father, safely keep
All thy little children here
And in all lands, far and near.[1]

But simply teaching children to memorize prayers is not enough. It is the spirit and fellowship of prayer that we are anxious for them to know and enjoy. It is only as they learn to pray for themselves that they grow into an understanding of the real meaning of prayer.

Fathers and mothers, therefore, should begin early to encourage their children to "talk with God" about the happenings of daily life. These prayers will startle

[1] From "Children's Prayers—Recorded by Their Mother." Copyright by the Pilgrim Press. Used by permission.

sometimes even the most experienced of parents with their vivid reality. One four-year-old youngster paused in saying his bedtime prayer long enough to ask God's permission to spank his two-year-old brother who was tickling his foot.

Parents who are trying to help their children learn to pray in a natural and wholesome manner will find such books as the following very helpful: "Children's Prayers —Recorded by Their Mother" and "The Dawn of Religion in the Mind of the Child," the latter by Edith E. Read Mumford.

2. *Grace at Meals.*—Every child seems to feel a desire to thank Some One for his food long before he is able to express any very definite ideas about God. Grace at meals not only provides a splendid opportunity for expressing our gratitude to God for food and daily blessings, but helps us to realize the presence of the Unseen Guest, the Infinite Spirit of God.

The form used in saying grace should be varied. Passages of Scripture may be used occasionally. A stanza of a hymn such as,

> Break thou the bread of life,
> Dear Lord, to me,
> As thou didst break the loaves
> Beside the sea;
> Beyond the sacred page
> I seek thee, Lord;
> My spirit pants for thee,
> O living Word,

may be repeated or sung.

Now and then, it will be helpful to follow the custom

of our Quaker friends and have grace without any spoken words. Each person simply bows his head for a few moments of silent thanksgiving. The father signals the close by a whispered "Amen."

Each child, as soon as he is old enough to talk, should be given the privilege of leading the family in this form of worship. His words may not be so plainly pronounced or his ideas so well expressed as those coming from an older member of the family, but the opportunity to share actively in this act of family worship will go a long way toward helping him to realize that he is a member of a larger family—even the family of God.

3. *General Family Prayers.*—The story in the earlier part of this chapter of the family gathering around the piano for a song or two is an excellent illustration of a practical way of including the entire family in a few moments of worship.

Somewhere, somehow every family should strive to have a few minutes together during the day. No hard and fast rules can be laid down, but the maintenance of wholesome family life is dependent upon our taking time to know and love the members of our own families.

As has been indicated, music forms an excellent basis for these worship periods. In the event that the family does not sing, a phonograph with a good variety of sacred selections may help overcome this difficulty. Good worship music is also available over the radio. A number of books have been prepared especially for helping busy parents who are anxious to have wholesome family worship. One of the most practical is "A Book of Worship," by Wade Crawford Barclay. This

volume provides a brief worship service for each day in the year. Price $2.50.

How the Home and the Sunday School Can Coöperate in Worship

In addition to having periods of worship in their own homes and thereby training the children in the meaning of real worship, parents can coöperate with the worship services of the Sunday school in at least two other ways.

First, they can take advantage of the fact that younger children especially like to talk about the things that they take part in. A few simple questions at the dinner table after the family has returned from Sunday school will give the children in the home an opportunity to tell of their part in the services and thereby greatly strengthen the effect of the service upon their lives. These questions should not take the form of an "examination" about the mechanical details of the service. Rather they should open up the way for the child to describe what happened and what it means to him.

Questions of a general nature that may be asked following almost any worship service are: Did you enjoy the service this morning? What was the thing that you liked best about it? Is there any way that father and mother can share in the work of the school?

If the story is mentioned, the child should be given an opportunity to tell it in his own words. Then the question may be asked: Why do you like this story?

Hymns or Scripture passages may be treated in the same manner.

Second, parents can help the leaders of worship in the

Sunday school by telling them of the difficult problems and interesting activities which their children are engaged in at home and in the community. This information will give the leaders of worship and the teacher of the child an opportunity to plan the worship of the school around the daily experiences of their pupils. In this way, worship will likely be more real to the children.

Worship through Work

The spirit in which we go about our daily tasks may be truly worshipful. The humblest toil, if honestly and cheerfully done, is in itself a magnificent tribute to the God who "*made* the heaven and the earth."

There is an old story of some workmen who were engaged in quarrying stone. One day a stranger paused near by and spoke to one of them. "What are you doing?" he asked. Without so much as looking up, the workman replied, "I am working until quitting time this evening."

The stranger turned to another workman with the same question, and he replied almost as quickly, "I am working for five dollars a day, sir."

Over in another corner of the quarry was another workman who seemed to be busily engaged in dressing a large piece of stone. The stranger watched him for a little while and then addressed him with the same question that he had asked the others. The workman flicked a bit of stone from his chisel before answering. "Do you see that cathedral over yonder?" he asked. "Well, *I am helping to build it*, sir."

What a difference in the outlook of these men! One

was watching the clock; another was thinking only of pay day; but the third *was helping to build a magnificent cathedral.*

It is good to be alive. As we go about our work on the farm, at the office, in the schoolroom, or in the home, may we keep this beautiful prayer in our hearts:

> Give me not scenes more charming; give me eyes
> To see the beauty that around me lies;
> To see the charm of soul, see angels shy
> Among the faces of the passers-by.[2]

[2] Quoted by Katherine R. Logan in "The Upper Road of Vision." Copyright by Richard R. Smith, Inc. Used by permission.

APPENDIX

1. WORSHIP SERVICES FOR STUDY

THE services included here are for study and discussion by Sunday school workers who are interested in improving the quality of the services in their own schools. They are not "model" services in any sense and should never be used without careful study and adaptation to local conditions.

Classes or groups will find it profitable to study these services along with programs of their own building. An effort should be made to test them by the principles discussed in the earlier chapters of this book.

Perhaps the first step in the study of these services should be the setting down of all questions which the class wishes to ask about them. For example, there will be such major questions as these:

Will this service help the worshiper to know God?

Does it have any connection with the problems or needs of the worshipers?

Is the material (hymns, prayers, stories, etc.) used in the service suited to the purpose of the service as expressed in the theme?

Is the material suitable to the age and experience of the group for whom the service is planned?

Does it provide for the logical development of the worship experience as described in Chapter I?

Does it reveal careful planning on the part of the leader and his helpers?

Will it tend to create a desire for further worship on the part of those who share in it?

The Call of the Upward Road

Instrumental Music: "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord."

Leader: "A day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

Hymn: "Soldiers of Christ, Arise." (*All standing.*)

Psalm 121: (*School remains standing and reads in unison.*)

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
From whence cometh my help.

My help cometh from the Lord,
Which made heaven and earth.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:
He that keepeth thee will not slumber.

Behold, he that keepeth Israel
Shall neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is thy keeper:
The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.

The sun shall not smite thee by day,
Nor the moon by night.

The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil:
He shall preserve thy soul.

The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in
From this time forth, and even for evermore.

Prayer: (*By a young man. School seated and heads bowed.*)
Our heavenly Father, we thank thee that thou hast given us the everlasting and eternal hills. We thank thee that they lift up their heads above the smoke and the fog that hide the lowlands of life from the brightness of the rising sun.

Our Father, we would not only turn our eyes to the hills from whence cometh thy help to the sons of men, but we would climb their rugged slopes and know for ourselves the joy of traveling the roads that lead onward and upward.

We pray not for easy tasks; but for strength to do the things that are hard and difficult.

May we see thy Son, Jesus Christ, as he walked the road that led up a hill and to a cross; and seeing him, resolve *anew* to place our hands in his and follow where he leads. Amen.

Talk: "Why Choose the Upward Road?" (*The following suggestions may serve as an outline.*)

The call of the upward road comes to all, but especially to young men and women. It is our privilege to answer. In fact, we *must* answer. Whether we think of it or not, we are daily choosing the roads that we travel.

Why choose the upward road? Everybody knows that it is more difficult than the broad highway that follows the level surface of the valley.

First, we would choose the upward road because it brings out the best in us. Strange as it may seem, it is true that we do not grow stronger by doing easy things. Walking on level ground does not develop one's strength like climbing mountains. The boy who always selects the easy problems in his class in mathematics never becomes a great mathematician. The team that plays only those opponents that are easily beaten never becomes a champion.

Second, the upward road is the way of greatest opportunity. There is an old saying that "there is room at the top." It is true, because so many people are content with less than the best. No matter how high we may climb, there is always room ahead. New visions, new opportunities are always open to him who moves upward.

Choosing the upward road does not mean that you must necessarily leave home. We begin to climb where we are. It is just a matter of taking an upward step. We can climb the upward road of better living in our homes; of better work in our

Sunday schools and churches; of service to our fellow man in our own community.

Hymn: "Rise Up, O Men of God." (*May be sung by entire school or read by the leader as a closing prayer.*)

Rise up, O men of God!
Have done with lesser things;
Give heart and soul and mind and strength
To serve the King of kings.

Rise up, O men of God!
His kingdom tarries long;
Bring in the day of brotherhood
And end the night of wrong.

Lift high the cross of Christ!
Tread where his feet have trod:
As brothers of the Son of Man
Rise up, O men of God![1]

Instrumental Music: "Onward, Christian Soldiers." (*While pupils march to places assigned for class work.*)

The Practice of Peace

(*Suitable for use on the Sunday before Armistice Day*)

Leader: (*Walking to front of platform.*) "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

Hymn: "God of Our Fathers, Whose Almighty Hand."

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 13: 1-13. (*To be read by some one who has carefully prepared for it.*)

Story: "Two Monks Who Tried to Quarrel."

On the hills of Europe are the ruins of many monasteries. A long time ago men who were called monks lived in these monasteries. The best of these monks did a great many wonderful things. Some of them painted great pictures which we still admire. Some wrote and played and sang music which we still

[1] By William P. Merrill. Used by permission.

love. Some spent years in making copies of the Bible, doing all the lettering by hand, before there were any printing presses, and these beautiful manuscripts can still be seen in the museums. Many of the monks often went down to the villages round about, reading and preaching to the people and helping them in various ways. Altogether, they lived a peaceful, happy, and useful life.

One day one of these monks said to another, "Let's have a quarrel." "A quarrel?" said his friend. "What's a quarrel? I'm sure that I don't know how to quarrel." "Very well," said the first monk, "I'll show you." So the first monk tried to show the second one how to quarrel.

"Now, you see this brick," he said. "We will place it on the ground between us. Then I will say, 'This brick is mine.' Then you must say, 'O no! It is mine.' Then I will say, 'But I say it is mine,' and so we shall have a quarrel." "All right," said the second monk, "let's begin."

So the first monk put a brick down on the ground. "Do you see that brick? Well, it's mine." "O no," said the other, "it is mine." "But I tell you it is mine," shouted the first monk. "Well, then," said the other. "well, then—take it!" They had *forgotten how* to quarrel.

How often we quarrel over petty little trifles. We think that war is a terrible thing, and yet war is just quarreling and fighting on a big scale—and sometimes things that nations quarrel about are just trifles. If only people could just forget how to quarrel, there wouldn't be any more war.

The two monks didn't fight. They had forgotten how. They had lived so long in friendliness and peace that it was impossible for them even to get angry.

Jesus said that we should love even our enemies and do good to those who do us harm, as well as to those who are good to us, so that we may be children of our heavenly Father. Love conquereth all things. Let's all forget how to quarrel.[2]

[2]Adapted from the story, "Two Monks Who Tried to Quarrel," in "Little Ten Minutes," by F. T. Bayley. Fleming H. Revell Company. Used by permission.

Prayer: (*By the leader. School remains seated.*) Our Heavenly Father, we ask that thou wilt forgive us for being so ready to quarrel and strive against one another; nation against nation, and brother against brother. May we, like these monks of old, live in friendliness and peace together until it will be impossible for us to make war upon one another. May we seek to know the meaning of thy love in our daily lives. Grant that through the practice of brotherly love we may overcome all hatred and prejudice and make the kingdom of thy Son, the Prince of Peace, to come in all the world.

And this we ask in his name. Amen.

Hymn: "America." (*After singing the first stanza bring the service to a close by singing the following stanza to the tune of "America."*)

God, grant us now thy peace,
Bid all dissensions cease;
God, send us peace—
Peace in true liberty,
Peace in equality,
Peace and fraternity,
God, send us peace.

Benediction by the Leader: "Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

The Spirit of Christmas[3]

Instrumental Prelude: Music of "Silent Night! Holy Night!"

Hymn: "Silent Night! Holy Night!" (*Sing softly while school remains seated.*)

Prayer: (*By the leader.*) We thank thee, Father, for great days in our calendar. We thank thee for Christmas, the best day of all. We thank thee for the meaning of the day, and more

[3]This service of worship was prepared by Rev. I. L. Claud and used in the Sunday school at Newark, Ark., on the Sunday before Christmas, 1929.

especially for the spirit that pervades our people. Lord, make our generosity Christian and our celebrations religious. As the Father gave because he loved so, and the wise men gave as an act of worship, help us to give that we might bring good cheer and advance the kingdom of thy dear Son. Thou didst give the perfect gift, and the wise men gave precious and valuable gifts; help us then to give our very best to thee, O Lord. Finally, O God, help us that the spirit of all our Christmas celebration may be in the spirit of the Christ whose birthday this is. We ask it humbly in his name. Amen.

Hymn: "O Worship the King." (*School standing.*)

Scripture: Matthew 2: 1, 2, 10, 11; Luke 2: 10-14.

Reading or Talk: "Keeping Christmas." (*By a young man or woman.*)

It is a good thing to observe Christmas Day. The mere marking of times and seasons, when men agree to stop work and make merry together, is a wise and wholesome custom. It helps one to feel the supremacy of the common life over the individual life. It reminds a man to set his own little watch, now and then, by the great clock of humanity which runs on sun time.

But there is a better thing than the observance of Christmas Day, and that is keeping Christmas.

Are you willing to forget what you have done for other people and to remember what other people have done for you; to ignore what the world owes you; to put your rights in the background and your chances to do a little more than your duty in the foreground; to see that your fellow men are just as real as you are and try to look behind their faces to their hearts, hungry for joy; to own that probably the only good reason for your existence is not what you are going to get out of life, but what you are going to give to life; to close your book of complaints against the management of the universe and look around you for a place where you can sow a few seeds of happiness—are you willing to do these things even for a day? Then you can keep Christmas.

And if you keep it for a day, why not always?
But you can never keep it alone.[4]

Hymn: "Joy to the World." (*School standing.*)
Prayer of Dismissal: The Lord's Prayer. (*In unison.*)

2. MATERIALS FOR USE IN WORSHIP SERVICES

The material included here has been selected with the view of supplementing whatever other worship materials the Sunday school may have as a part of its regular working equipment.

Calls to Worship

Leader: O come, let us worship and bow down:
Let us kneel before the Lord our maker.
School: Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,
And make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.
(Psalm 95: 6, 2.)

Leader: Bless the Lord, O my soul:
And all that is within me, bless his holy name.
School: Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all his benefits.
(Psalm 103: 1, 2.)

O let the nations be glad and sing for joy:
For thou shalt judge the people righteously,
And govern the nations upon earth.
(Psalm 67: 4.)

[4] From "The Spirit of Christmas," by Henry van Dyke. Copyright, 1905, by Charles Scribner's Sons. By permission of the publishers.

Leader: Give ear to my words, O Lord; consider my meditation.

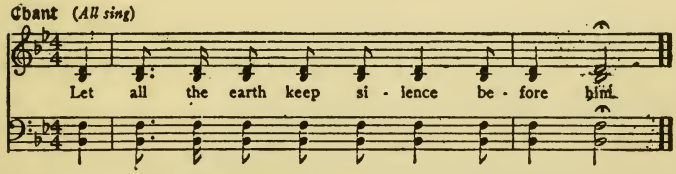
School: Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God:
For unto thee will I pray. (Psalm 5: 1, 2.)

I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the house of the Lord.
(Psalm 122: 1.)

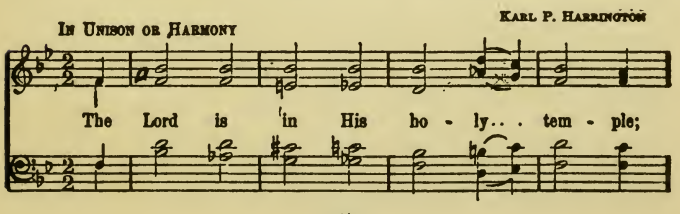
Responses

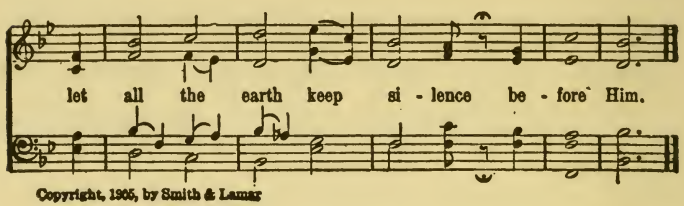
Quite often the leader of worship will find it very helpful to have the school sing a response to the "Call to Worship." That is, the leader recites the first line and the school sings or chants the second. The one given herewith is easily learned and is very beautiful.

Leader: "The Lord is in his holy temple."

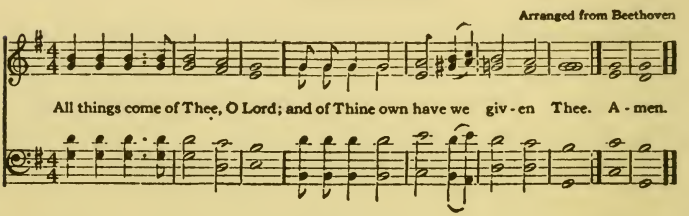


Both lines may be sung as in the following:





A beautiful response[5] for use in connecton with the offering is:



Prayers

Every school should memorize a number of prayers suitable for use when the leader desires that the entire group join with him in audible prayer.

A Prayer of Reverence

O Thou who art the God of power and of love, we come to Thee with thankful praise and adoration. Without Thee there is no life, nor any joy. Thou hast made the world in all its beauty. Thou dost cause the sun to give us warmth and light. The shining stars obey Thy will; the flowers are also Thy ministers.

Teacher us, O Father, true obedience to Thy perfect law.

[5] From "The Book of Worship of the Church School," by Hugh Hartshorne. Charles Scribner's Sons. Used by permission.

From all proud thoughts defend us. In our ignorance, Thy wisdom give us. Make us strong in Thine eternal strength. And thus, enfolded by Thy love, may we live in fellowship with Thee, O God, forever. Amen.[6]

A Class Prayer

O God, our Heavenly Father, we thank Thee for the homes we love, for the friends Thou hast sent us, and for all Thy gifts to us. May we carry Thy blessings to others, as Thou hast freely given them to us.

Keep in safety those who are not with us to-day and all those whom we love; and grant us and all Thy children the will and strength to follow Jesus Christ our Saviour. Amen.[6]

Thanksgiving for God's Out-of-Doors

We thank Thee, O Lord, for the things that are out-of-doors; for the fresh air and the open sky and the growing grass and the tiny flowers and the setting sun and the wooded hill and the brown earth beneath our feet. They are all good, and they all speak the truth, and we rest ourselves and get new strength to go back to the world of restless men. Keep us ever like thy good world, rugged and wholesome and true. Amen.[7]

A Prayer of Youth

Give me clean hands, clean words, and clean thoughts; help me to stand for the hard right against the easy wrong; save me from habits that harm; teach me to work as hard and play as fair in thy sight alone as if all the world saw; forgive me when I am unkind; and help me to forgive those who are unkind to

[6] From "The Book of Worship of the Church School," by Hugh Hartshorne. Charles Scribner's Sons. Used by permission.

[7] "Outdoor Prayers—Dartmouth Outing Club." Quoted in "Hymnal for American Youth."

me; keep me ready to help others at some cost to myself; send me chances to do a little good every day, and to grow more like Christ. Amen.[8]

Benedictions

A benediction in which the entire school joins is an effective way of closing a worship service. The twelfth verse of the ninetieth Psalm is a familiar unison benediction: "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

The letters of St. Paul have a great many passages that may be used as benedictions by any school. A familiar one is the last verse of Second Corinthians:

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

In some instances it may be necessary to make slight changes in the arrangement of a Scripture passage in order to make it helpful as a benediction. The following benedictions are based upon Scripture passages, but the arrangement of the words has been changed somewhat:

The Lord bless us and keep us;
The Lord make His face to shine upon us and be gracious unto us;
The Lord lift up His countenance upon us, and give us peace. Amen.[9]

May the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, that peace which the world can neither give nor take away, be with us now, and abide in our hearts forevermore. Amen.

[8] William DeWitt Hyde. Quoted in the "Hymnal for American Youth."

[9] From "Manual for Training in Worship," by Hugh Hartshorne. Charles Scribner's Sons. Used by permission.

3. STARTING A LIBRARY OF WORSHIP MATERIALS[10]

Every Sunday school, no matter how small, should begin the collection of worship material suitable for use in its services. A few dollars a year for appropriate magazines, songbooks, and books of worship stories will go a long way toward providing the school with all the worship material that it needs.

While no effort is made to list here *all* the materials that might prove useful in the worship services of a Sunday school, it is hoped that these suggestions will be helpful especially to the Sunday school workers who are unacquainted with the sources of worship materials.

1. Songbooks: Each school will need enough copies of some good standard hymnal for use in the general worship service of the school. One of the following will meet this need:

"The New Cokesbury Hymnal." Lamar and Whitmore, 810 Broadway, Nashville, Tenn. 35 cents.

"American Church and Church School Hymnal." E. O. Excell Company, 810 Fine Arts Building, Chicago, Ill. 60 cents.

"Hymnal for American Youth." Century Company. $1.

"Hymnal for Young People." A. S. Barnes and Company. $1.25.

In addition to a liberal supply of one of these general-purpose hymnals, the teachers of the children's classes

[10]All books and magazines listed here can be ordered through Lamar & Whitmore, 810 Broadway, Nashville, Tenn.

should be supplied with at least one of the recommended books for the corresponding age-groups.[11]

If the Beginner and Primary Departments are combined, the teachers should be supplied with the following:

"Worship and Conduct Songs for Beginners and Primaries," by Elizabeth Shields. Presbyterian Committee of Publication. $1.

"Melodies," Leyda Publshing Company.

2. Magazines:[11]

The *International Journal of Religious Education*. 5 South Wabash Avenue, Chicago, Ill. Per annum, $1.50.

The *Workers' Council*. Lamar & Whitmore, 810 Broadway, Nashville, Tenn. Per annum, $1.

The *Elementary Teacher*. Lamar & Whitmore, 810 Broadway, Nashville, Tenn. Per annum, $1.

3. Books:

(1) *Books on the meaning of worship:*

"Training the Devotional Life," by L. A. Weigle and H. H. Tweedy. Pilgrim Press. 75 cents.

"Modern Worship," by Von Ogden Vogt. Yale University. $2.

"Methods of Private Religious Living," by Henry Nelson Wieman. Macmillan. $1.75.

For workers with Beginners (4- and 5-year-old children): "The Worship of the Little Child," by Edna Dean Baker. Cokesbury Press. 75 cents.

[11] Write your denominational headquarters for a list of approved songbooks and magazines carrying worship materials. Workers in Sunday schools of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, should write to the General Sunday School Board, 810 Broadway, Nashville, Tenn.

For workers with Primaries (6-, 7-, and 8-year-old children): "Worship Training for Primary Children," by Clara Beers Blashfield. Abingdon Press. $1.

For workers with Juniors (9-, 10-, and 11-year-old children): "Training Juniors in Worship," by Mary Alice Jones. Cokesbury Press. $1.

For workers with Young People: "Training Young People in Worship," by Shaver and Stock. Pilgrim Press. $1.25.

(2) *Books on method in story-telling:*

"Stories and Story-Telling," by Edward Porter St. John. Pilgrim Press. 75 cents.

"How to Tell Stories to Children," by Sara Cone Bryant. Houghton Mifflin. $1.50.

"For the Story Teller," by Carolyn S. Bailey. Milton Bradley Company. $1.75.

(3) *Books of stories:*

"Knights of Service," by Emerson Bradshaw. Abingdon Press. 75 cents.

"Why the Chimes Rang and Other Stories," by Raymond Alden. Bobbs-Merrill Company. $2.50.

"Story Worship Programs for the Church School Year," by Jay S. Stowell. Doubleday, Doran & Co. $1.50.

"More Story Worship Programs," by Jay S. Stowell. Doubleday, Doran & Co. $1.75.

"Stories of Brotherhood," by H. B. Hunting. Missionary Education Movement. 75 cents.

"One Hundred and One Hymn Stories," by Carl F. Price. Abingdon Press. 75 cents.

"More Hymn Stories," by Carl F. Price. Abingdon Press. 75 cents.

"Hymn Stories," by Elizabeth Colson. Pilgrim Press. $1.25.

"Story Worship Material." National Girls' Work Board, Toronto, Canada.

(4) *Books on the use of pictures in worship:*

"The Use of Art in Religious Education," by A. E. Bailey. Abingdon Press. $1.

"Pictures Every Child Should Know," by Mary Schell Bacon. Gossett and Dunlap. $1.

"How to Show Pictures to Children," by E. M. Hurll. Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.

"Famous Bible Pictures and Stories They Tell," by Elizabeth Hubbard Bonsall. American Sunday School Union, Philadelphia. $1.50.

(5) *Books on the use of pageants and dramas:*

"Pageants for Special Days in the Church Year," by Mary M. Russell. Doubleday, Doran & Co. $1.50.

"Dramatization of Bible Stories," by Elizabeth Miller Lobingier. University of Chicago Press. $1.25.

"Use of Drama in Religious Education." Pamphlet issued by the Religious Education Association, 308 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

(6) *Outdoor services:*

"Services for the Open," by L. I. Mattoon and H. D. Bragdon. Century Company. $1.

(7) *Books of prayer:*

"Manual for Training in Worship," by Hugh Hartshorne. Charles Scribner's Sons. $1.50.

"A Book of Modern Prayers," by S. McComb. Longmans, Green & Co. $1.50.

"Prayers of the Social Awakening," by Walter Rauschenbusch. Pilgrim Press. $1.

"A Girl's Book of Prayers," by Margaret Slattery. Pilgrim Press. 35 cents.

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Ap 27 '42			
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